



**A CORPUS-BASED ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH  
SYNONYMS: REAL, GENUINE, AND AUTHENTIC**

**BY**

**JUTHATHIP WAEWSAMPUN**

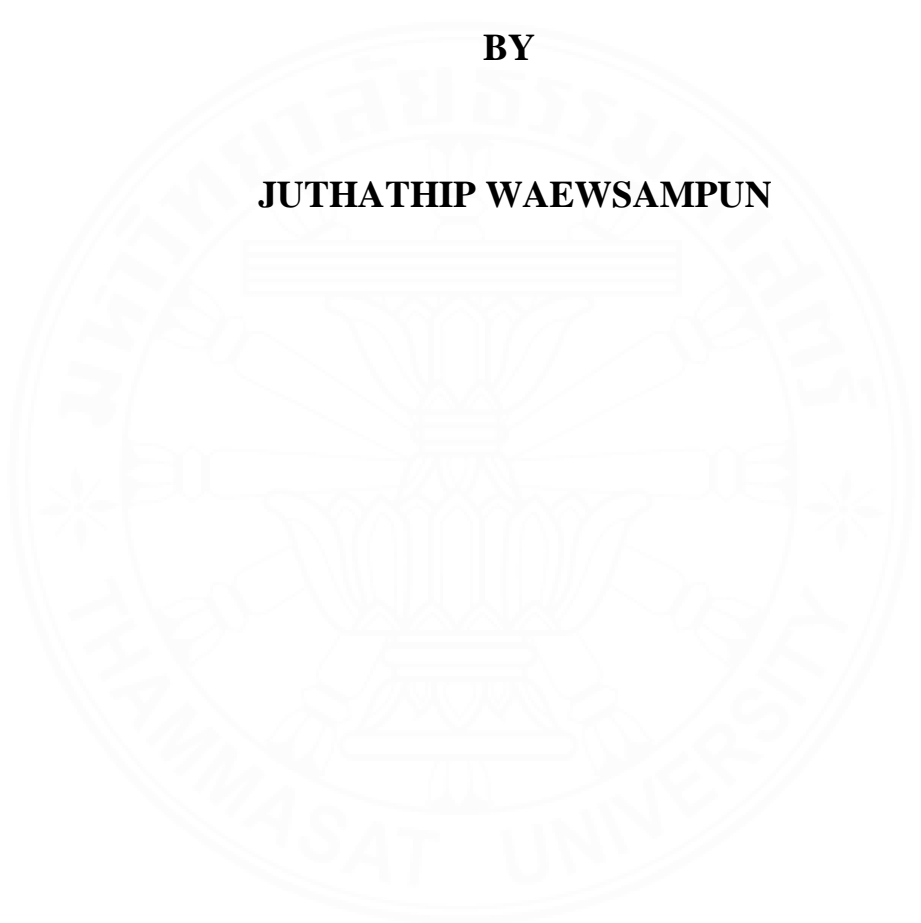
**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
OF MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING  
LANGUAGE INSTITUTE  
THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY  
ACADEMIC YEAR 2021**

**COPYRIGHT OF THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY**

**A CORPUS-BASED ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH  
SYNONYMS: REAL, GENUINE, AND AUTHENTIC**

**BY**

**JUTHATHIP WAEWSAMPUN**



**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  
COPYRIGHT OF THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY**

THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY  
LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

AN INDEPENDENT STUDY

BY

JUTHATHIP WAEWSAMPUN

ENTITLED

A CORPUS-BASED ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH SYNONYMS:  
REAL, GENUINE, AND AUTHENTIC

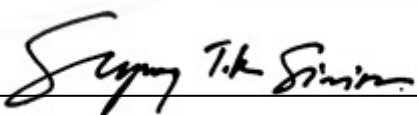
was approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Master of Arts in English Language Teaching

on July 19, 2022

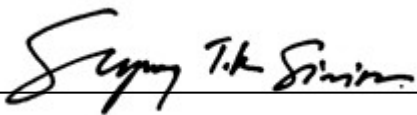
Chairman

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Associate Professor Supakorn Phoocharoensil, Ph.D.)

Member and Advisor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Associate Professor Supong Tangkiengsirisin, Ph.D.)

Director

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Associate Professor Supong Tangkiengsirisin, Ph.D.)

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Independent Study Title        | A CORPUS-BASED ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH SYNONYMS: REAL, GENUINE, AND AUTHENTIC |
| Author                         | Juthathip Waewsampun  |
| Degree                         | Master of Arts  |
| Major Field/Faculty/University | English Language Teaching<br>Language Institute<br>Thammasat University   |
| Independent Study Advisor      | Assoc. Prof. Supong Tangkiengsirisin, Ph.D.                               |
| Academic Year                  | 2021  |

## ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the similarities and differences of the three English synonyms: *real*, *genuine* and *authentic* with focus on meaning, degree of formality and noun collocations. The results, based on the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE), Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), signify that the target synonymous adjectives are loose synonyms. From the information derived from dictionaries, *real*, *genuine* and *authentic* are similar in core meanings, but each of them also has some differences in the senses of meaning. In terms of use, it is clear that the three synonyms cannot be used interchangeably in all contexts, as indicated by the differences of the distribution across eight genres and the characteristics of noun collocations.

**Keywords:** Synonym, COCA, Genre, Noun collocations, Formality

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research would not have been possible without the exceptional support of numerous people. First of all, I would like to express my great gratitude to my advisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Supong Tangkiengsirisin who dedicated his time to provide me invaluable advice, feedback, and attention to the details that kept my work on track. Secondly, I am also especially indebted to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Supakorn Phoocharoensil for the insightful comments and suggestions in conducting this research.

Most importantly, I would also like to thank my family and friends who are always there to give love and support in whatever I pursue. Lastly, I wish to thank Kim Jiwon and Kim Hanbin who provide me unending inspiration.

Juthathip Waewsampun



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  | Page |
|--|------|
| ABSTRACT   | (1)  |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS                                     | (2)  |
| LIST OF TABLES                                       | (5)  |
| LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS                                | (6)  |
| CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION                               | 1    |
| 1.1 Background of the Study                          | 1    |
| 1.2 Research Objectives                              | 2    |
| 1.3 Research Questions                               | 2    |
| 1.4 Statement of the Problem                         | 2    |
| 1.5 Definition of Key Terms                          | 2    |
| 1.6 Scope of the Study                               | 3    |
| 1.7 Significance of the Study                        | 3    |
| 1.8 Organization of the Study                        | 4    |
| CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE                       | 5    |
| 2.1 Synonym  | 5    |
| 2.1.1 The Concept of Synonym                         | 5    |
| 2.1.2 Types of Synonym                               | 5    |
| 2.2 English Language Corpora                         | 6    |
| 2.2.1 The Concept of Corpora                         | 6    |
| 2.2.2 Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) | 6    |
| 2.3 Criteria for Distinguishing Synonyms             | 7    |

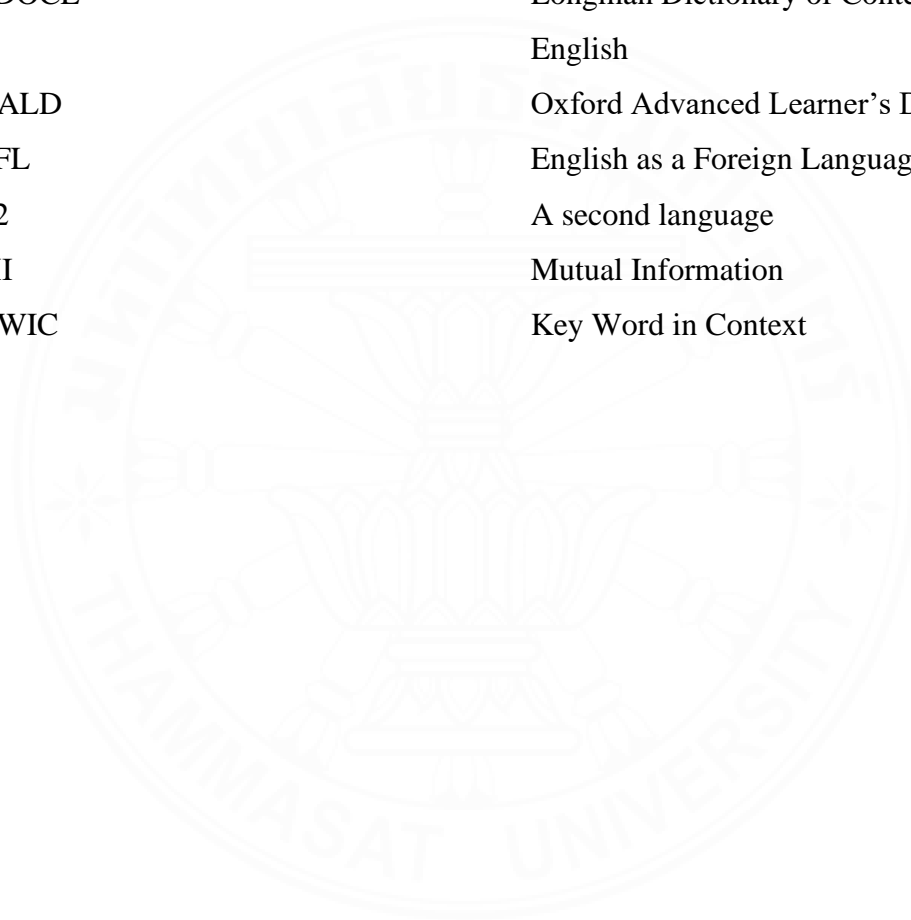
|  |           |
|--|-----------|
|  | (4)       |
| 2.3.1 Meaning  | 7         |
| 2.3.2 Degree of Formality                                | 7         |
| 2.3.3 Collocation  | 8         |
| 2.4 Related Studies                                      | 9         |
| <b>CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>                    | <b>12</b> |
| 3.1 Targeted Words                                       | 12        |
| 3.2 Instrument   | 12        |
| 3.3 Procedure  | 12        |
| 3.4 Data Collection                                      | 13        |
| 3.5 Data Analysis  | 14        |
| <b>CHAPTER 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</b>                  | <b>15</b> |
| 4.1 Similarities and Differences in Meaning              | 15        |
| 4.2 Degree of Formality                                  | 17        |
| 4.3 Noun Collocations                                    | 19        |
| <b>CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>         | <b>26</b> |
| 5.1 Summary of the Study                                 | 26        |
| 5.2 Summary of the Findings                              | 26        |
| 5.3 Conclusion   | 27        |
| 5.4 Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research | 28        |
| 5.5 Pedagogical Implications                             | 29        |
| <b>REFERENCES</b>  | <b>30</b> |

**LIST OF TABLES**

| Tables  | Page |
|---|------|
| 1. Definition of <i>Real</i> , <i>Genuine</i> , and <i>Authentic</i> from Two Online Dictionaries             | 15   |
| 2. Overall Frequency of <i>Real</i> , <i>Genuine</i> , and <i>Authentic</i> across the Eight Genres from COCA | 17   |
| 3. Distribution of <i>Real</i> , <i>Genuine</i> , and <i>Authentic</i> across the Eight Genres from COCA      | 18   |
| 4. Top-30 Frequency List of Noun Collocations of <i>Real</i> , <i>Genuine</i> , and <i>Authentic</i> in COCA  | 19   |
| 5. Semantic Preference of Noun Collocations of <i>Real</i>  | 20   |
| 6. Semantic Preference of Noun Collocations of <i>Genuine</i>   | 22   |
| 7. Semantic Preference of Noun Collocations of <i>Authentic</i>   | 23   |
| 8. Comparison of Themes between <i>Real</i> , <i>Genuine</i> , and <i>Authentic</i>                           | 25   |

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

| <b>Symbols/Abbreviations</b> | <b>Terms</b>                               |
|------------------------------|--|
| COCA                         | Corpus of Contemporary American English    |
| LDOCE                        | Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English |
| OALD                         | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary       |
| EFL                          | English as a Foreign Language              |
| L2                           | A second language                          |
| MI                           | Mutual Information                         |
| KWIC                         | Key Word in Context                        |



# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Inadequate English vocabulary knowledge remains a major problem for most L2 learners. One possible reason might be because of the inadequacy of English language exposure. Particularly in Thailand, English has a major role as a foreign language. As for the Thai educational system, English language instruction is required for many Thai students for a total of twelve years. However, most of them fail in standard English testing due to the little opportunity to utilize the language outside of the classroom. Additionally, they frequently run into problems or difficulties when learning new vocabulary because English vocabulary is considered to be sophisticated in language use, which can make learning second languages challenging (Asgari and Mustapha, 2011). Sometimes, the students do not know which words should be used in certain contexts, so they choose the incorrect words.

One aspect that is always used incorrectly is *synonyms* since “*learners are more likely to confuse words that are similar in meaning than words that do not have close semantic links*” (Webb, 2007, p.122). Accordingly, it is inevitable to say that discriminating among English synonyms is challenging for L2 learners because there is a large amount of synonymy in the English language such that many language learners struggle to use the appropriate words in a specific context. Fromkin and Rodman (1998) claimed that “*synonyms are words that have the same or nearly the same meaning to each other*” (p. 165). Thus, the difficult part of learning a new language for L2 learners is the way to distinguish the similarities or differences in terms of the use of synonyms in different contexts regarding their senses of meanings, collocations, style, and grammatical patterns. Moreover, the slight differences in meanings between these words can make it difficult for them to select the accurate and precise words. So, to expand the vocabulary knowledge effectively, learning synonyms in all aspects is an essential factor for the improvement of their English language skills.

## 1.2 Research Objectives

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the similarities and differences between three adjectives *real*, *genuine*, and *authentic* regarding the meaning, degree of formality, and noun collocations by using the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE) and Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) as the main instruments of the study.

## 1.3 Research Questions

What are the similarities and differences in terms of meaning, degree of formality, and noun collocations of the three synonyms *real*, *genuine* and *authentic*?

## 1.4 Statement of the Problem

Many language learners whose English is not their first language often have problems with English synonyms, particularly loose synonyms where they have the similar meaning, but cannot be used interchangeably in every context. One word that can be difficult for the EFL learners to use is the word *real* and two other words that have a similar sense of meaning which are *genuine* and *authentic*. These three words can be found in both everyday communication and academic texts which can lead to students' confusion when they have to choose either of them in a particular context. To look for the similarities and differences of the three adjectives, the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE) and Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD) are used to extract the definitions of each word. Then, COCA program is used to examine the distribution in different genres and noun collocations in order to provide clear information of the differences of the three target words.

## 1.5 Definitions of Key Terms

1) **Synonym** refers to a set of words that have similar meaning in the same language. The example of English synonyms is *real*, *genuine*, and *authentic* which are being investigated in this study.

2) **Strict Synonym** refers to a group of words that have the same exact meaning and can substitute for each other in all contexts.

3) **Loose Synonym** refers to a group of words that are similar in core meaning but different in some senses of meaning, so they cannot substitute for each other in all situations.

4) **Corpus** refers to a group of written and spoken texts that are organized and saved on computer software and provide a variety of texts and authentic data.

5) **COCA** refers to the Corpus of Contemporary American English, the most comprehensive corpus of American English which has a wide range of genres.

6) **Concordance line** refers to the main instrument in a corpus system showing the results of a searched word or phrase from various genres. Each line presents the patterns in which the word occurs.

7) **Collocation** refers to a combination of words which often occur together and are presented statistically.

8) **Formality** refers to style of expression, including tone and choice of words, which depends on the purpose of the message and the relationship between speakers.

9) **Genre** refers to the eight genres including TV and movies subtitles, spoken contexts, fiction, magazines, newspaper, websites, blog, and academic articles. Each genre presents the information about the frequency lists and grammatical patterns.

## 1.6 Scope of the Study

This present study focuses on the analysis of the three synonymous adjectives, namely, *real*, *genuine*, and *authentic*. The data was collected from two online dictionaries which are LDOCE and OALD as well as the COCA program to explore the similarities and differences of the three synonyms in terms of the meaning, degree of formality and noun collocations.

## 1.7 Significance of the Study

The result of this study can assist EFL learners and English teachers in understanding the similarities and differences between the three synonyms and show how to use them in real contexts with the examples from the concordance lines along with the common noun collocations of each target word. Moreover, the corpus will also provide the information of the degree of formality between the three synonyms by presenting the distribution of each word in different genres. These can help enhancing

the English learning of L2 learners and also developing the teaching materials of the English teachers.

### **1.8 Organization of the Study**

There are five chapters in this study. The study's background, objectives, research questions are all described in the introduction in the first chapter, along with the definition of terms, scope of the study, significance of the study, and organization of the study. The second chapter includes a review of literature on the topic of synonyms, corpora, criteria for distinguishing synonyms and related studies. The study's research methodology is covered in Chapter three. Chapter four reveals the results and discussion of the study. The summary of the results, conclusions, limitations and recommendations for further research investigations are presented in Chapter five.



## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### 2.1 Synonym

##### 2.1.1 *The Concept of Synonym*

In accordance with Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2015, p.1536), synonym is “*a word or expression that has the same or nearly the same meaning as another in the same language.*” Synonym is important to enhance the knowledge of vocabulary. Learning a new set of words that have a similar meaning can promote an increase in the skills of English communication and the ability to use the appropriate words in the specific contexts.

##### 2.1.2 *Types of Synonym*

There are two main types of synonyms: *strict synonym* and *loose synonym*.

**2.1.2.1 Strict Synonyms** In its strict sense, the synonyms are words that have the exact meaning in the same language and can substitute for each other in all contexts. In fact, they must be identical in every aspect of meaning with the same collocations and grammatical patterns so that the two can be applied interchangeably. Moreover, they must have equal frequency of use as shown in a corpus. However, Chung (2011) indicates that the strict synonyms in the English language have rarely been found because words cannot be interchangeable in all contexts.

**2.1.2.2 Loose Synonyms** The loose synonyms refer to a group of words that are similar in core meaning but different in some senses of meaning. According to this, they cannot be used interchangeably. Likewise, Jackson and Amvela (2000) state that the meaning of loose synonyms is that they can be coincided but cannot substitute for each other. For example, *bring about* and *cause*.

Generally, both verbs *bring about* and *cause* refer to “*to make it happen*”. However, Cambridge Online Dictionary presents the meanings of these two words with a slight difference as follows:

1) *bring about* (v.) means “to cause something to happen.”

2) *cause* (v.) means “to make something happen, especially something bad.”

As mentioned above, it can be clearly seen that *bring about* and *cause* are different in terms of connotations since the word *cause* commonly occurs in the negative sense with collocations, such as *damage* or *disease*. This suggests that *bring about* and *cause* are loose synonyms. They share core meanings, but the associative meaning is different. So, they cannot replace each other in every context.

Therefore, since most words in the English language are loose synonyms, EFL/ESL learners should be aware of the similarities and differences in all aspects in order to use the correct word for a specific context.

## 2.2 English Language Corpora

### 2.2.1 The Concept of Corpora

According to Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (9th edition, 2015, p.334), a corpus is “a collection of written or spoken texts.”

Nesselhauf (2011) states that “A *corpus* can be defined as a systematic collection of naturally occurring texts of both written and spoken language.” There are several types of corpora which are used to represent a variety of language use in both written and spoken language occurred in different genres. Those who are interested in linguistics analysis can select the corpora that relates to their studies. For example, Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), and British National Corpus (BNC).

### 2.2.2 Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)

One of the most widely-used corpora is the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). It has substantial data with more than one billion words, including 20 million words annually from 1990-2019. Due to that, COCA is a large corpus which contains a wide range of genres. In addition, it provides important details on word frequency lists and syntactic structures used in different genres, including both informal and formal genres. In comparing across genres, a corpus can be used to compare the differences between the related words that have similar meanings by looking at the collocations of each word. For example, according to the findings from Phoocharoensil’s study (2020), the noun *error* commonly collocates with the verb

*commit*, while the noun *mistake* usually collocates with the verb *make*, so *commit error* is common but *commit mistake* may rarely occur.

This leads to the term corpus-based studies which is commonly used in the area of linguistics analysis. The foundation of corpus-based studies is based on both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Usually, the data are analyzed with the help of specialized software on the computer which has the potential to yield in-depth information about language and give each word a variety of details, such as its frequency information, concordance lines, KWIC, definitions, collocations, synonyms or clusters. Accordingly, corpus-based studies have become the ideal method of linguistic investigation.

### **2.3 Criteria for Distinguishing Synonyms**

This study aimed to investigate the three synonyms, *real*, *genuine*, and *authentic* regarding three aspects: meaning, degree of formality, and noun collocations. These criteria used for distinguishing synonyms are adapted from Jackson and Amvela (2007).

#### **2.3.1 Meaning**

The term *synonymy* refers to the similarity of meaning that hold between two words or more. It is a significant factor that can be used to signify the differences between a set of words having similar meaning. In synonymy, especially the *loose synonyms*, two words may share core meanings but they may also have an associative or emotive meanings which can make one word distinct from another. (Jackson and Amvela, 2007) For example, according to Phoocharoensil (2010), the word *appeal* refers to a request made to a court of law or someone who is influential in the first sense of meaning. However, when this word occurs together with the preposition *against*, the sentence indicates the negative sense and is usually followed by the noun collocations that have negative meanings (i.e., *the dismissal, punishment, a jail sentence etc.*)

#### **2.3.2 Degree of Formality**

Degree of formality or style is a general criterion used for discriminating between synonyms. One of the pairs may be used more in general or informal context,

including slang words, while the other may be commonly used in a formal situation.

Here are examples of synonyms differentiated by degree of formality:

| <b>Formal</b> | <b>Informal</b> |
|---------------|-----------------|
| die           | decease         |
| argument      | disputation     |
| renounce      | give up         |
| caveat        | warning         |
| missive       | letter          |
| pulchritude   | beauty          |

| <b>Standard English</b> | <b>English slang</b>   |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| prison                  | clink                  |
| money                   | rhino, spondulix, etc. |
| heart                   | ticker                 |
| insane                  | barmy, etc.            |
| destroy                 | zap                    |
| face                    | phizog                 |

(Jackson & Amvela, 2000)

### **2.3.3 Collocation**

As stated in Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2014, p.336), collocation is “*the way in which some words are often used together, or a particular combination of words used in this way.*” In terms of synonyms, although a pair of words share the similar core meanings, some differ in the way they co-occur with different collocations.

Bennett (2010, p.12) defines a collocation as “*the statistical tendency of words to co-occur*” which relates to a meaningful relationship when a word usually follows other words in the same sentence.

Based on the classification of collocation, it can be divided into two main types: lexical collocations and grammatical collocations (Benson et al., 1986) Lexical collocations are the co-occurrence of two or more content words that do not contain the grammatical elements. For example,

- **adjective + noun:** heavy rain, happy meal
- **verb + noun:** save money, take an exam

While, the grammatical collocations are the combinations of content words and prepositions. For example,

- **noun + preposition:** problem of, member of
- **adjective + preposition:** proud of, responsible for

## 2.4 Related Studies

Insa-ard (2021) studied the meanings, distribution, collocations, and formality of the three target words: *concentrate*, *emphasize*, and *focus*. The data was collected from three dictionaries and the COCA software. From the results, *concentrate*, *emphasize*, and *focus* are loose synonyms as they have differences in collocations, semantic preferences, and formality.

Phoocharoensil, S. (2020) investigated the similarities and differences of the three synonyms *Consequence*, *Result*, and *Outcome* by looking at genres and collocation patterns. The COCA was used to collect the data. The analysis of the data revealed that the three synonyms have a high level of formality since they appear mostly in the academic texts. In terms of collocations, the three words share some common collocates which confirm their statuses as synonyms of one another. However, since there were different collocates specific to each noun, the three synonyms cannot be replaced in all contexts.

Jarunwaraphan and Mallikamas (2020) conducted a study to examine differences and similarities of two synonyms: *chance* and *opportunity* regarding the meanings, collocations, and patterns of distribution across the genres. The main research instruments were the online dictionaries and the COCA. From the results, the two synonyms have overlapping meanings as they cannot replace each other in all contexts. In terms of the patterns of distribution, *chance* was associated with the informal contexts since it is mostly found in the spoken genre, whereas *opportunity* was mostly found in academic texts. As for the collocations of the target words, most of the adjective collocates of *opportunity* are associated with something positive rather than negative, while the adjective collocates of *chance* are more likely to convey both negative and positive situations. At the same time, the verb collocates of the two

synonyms have different semantic preferences. The semantic preferences of *opportunity* involve the situations of ensuring that an opportunity exists, while those of *chance* are associated with the meaning of 'possibility'.

Wongrat (2018) examined the similarities and differences between the two verbs: *forecast* and *predict* in terms of collocation. The data was obtained from two online dictionaries (LDOCE and the Merriam-Webster Dictionary) to extract the definitions of each word. Then, the 200 concordance lines for each word were analyzed for collocation analysis. The findings showed that the two synonyms gave the similar sense of meaning and shared some collocations. This proves that the two synonyms are loose synonyms.

Chung (2011) conducted a corpus-based study of the two English verbs: *create* and *produce*. The data was drawn from two corpora (Brown Corpus and the Frown Corpus). This study aimed to investigate the similarities and differences of the two synonyms focusing on the collocation analysis. The results of the study presented that the two words are used differently regarding the selection of object argument. The word *Create* is often followed by the objects that are fewer in quantity and abstract in nature (e.g., *problem, image, world* etc.), while *produce* is often followed by the objects that are in great numbers and more concrete (e.g., *machines, goods, seeds*, etc.)

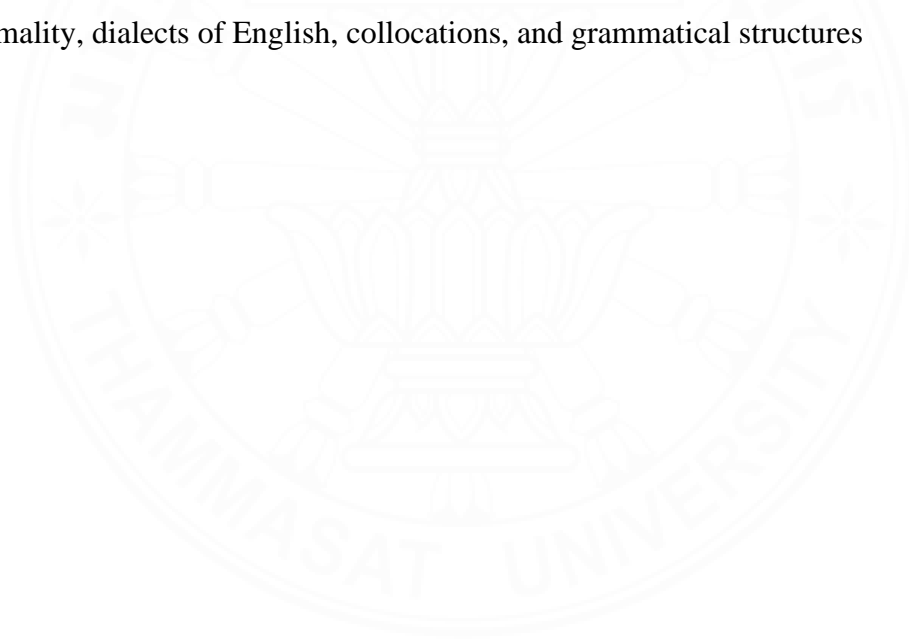
Aroonmanakun (2015) examined the two English adjectives *quick* and *fast* by looking at the differences of noun collocates. The results showed that some nouns are collocated with only either *quick* or *fast*, while some of them can occur with both words in the way that the senses of meaning are conveyed differently. For example, *a quick learner* is a person who learns something easily, while *a fast learner* is a person who learns something in a short time. But in some contexts, it does not matter much whether *quick* or *fast* are used.

Bonkrathok (2018) investigated the two synonymous verbs *convey* and *express* regarding three aspects: noun collocations, degree of formality and grammatical patterns. The data was extracted from the COCA. From the results, the shared noun collocations of the two verbs are *idea, emotion, and feeling*. In terms of degree of formality, the two verbs often occur in an academic textbook. While, in terms of grammatical patterns, five structures are shared and only a few structures are used

differently. Although the two verbs shared a few features, they still have differences. So, they cannot substitute for each other in all context.

Panyapayatjati (2016) focused on the meaning, grammatical patterns, and noun collocations while investigating the three verbs *grieve*, *mourn*, and *regret*. The findings showed that they shared some overlapping meaning. They cannot be replaceable in some contexts since the grammatical patterns are different. In terms of collocations, some nouns can co-occur with these three synonymous verbs in some contexts. So, the results emphasized that these verb synonyms are considered loose synonyms.

The results of the previous related studies seem to demonstrate that it is difficult to find the strict synonyms or a pair of words that have exact meaning in all aspects. Most English synonyms are loose synonyms. They may share some similar meaning but they cannot replace each other in every context due to the variations in style or formality, dialects of English, collocations, and grammatical structures



## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Targeted Words

This study investigates the similarities and differences between three synonyms, *real*, *genuine*, and *authentic* regarding three aspects which are meaning, degree of formality and noun collocations.

#### 3.2 Instrument

##### 3.2.1 *The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE) and Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD)*

These are the two leading dictionaries for learners of English of all levels which provide definitions, idioms, examples, thesaurus, pronunciations and grammatical structures in relation to two varieties of English: British English and American English.

##### 3.2.2 *Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)*

The COCA provides much data about the use of English language in authentic contexts from eight genres, including fiction, magazines, newspapers, academic texts, blog, webpages, tv and movies subtitles, and spoken language. It provides more authentic data and covers a greater variety of English genres than a dictionary. So, this is ideal for EFL learners to study and learn synonyms as well as for teachers who want to use the corpus to generate useful materials for their students.

#### 3.3 Procedure

To discriminate the similarities and differences between the three synonyms, three main processes are provided in this section with respect to meaning, degree of formality and collocations.

In respect of meaning, the three words were searched for on the websites of the two main dictionaries:

1. <https://www.ldoceonline.com> for the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE).

2. <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com> for the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD).

After searching for each word on the two websites, the results including the meaning in English and the sentence examples, will be compared.

In terms of degree of formality, the three synonyms were looked up separately on the COCA website. Then, the results will be shown in the table consisting of the information about the frequency of words across the eight genres ranged from the informal to formal genres. (e.g., TV and movies subtitles, in spoken contexts, fiction, magazines, newspaper, websites, blog, and academic articles)

In terms of noun collocations, the COCA website will provide the information of the words that usually co-occur with each target word. In looking for common collocations, the statistics utilized by COCA used to identify whether two words appear together by coincidence or have a strong link in collocations is the Mutual Information (MI) value or score. However, there is a chance that the rare occurrences will be identified as common collocates of the target words in the MI list. In other words, the collocations whose MI score is high are not always the representative examples because the total occurrences in a corpus can be very low (Szudarski, 2018). Thus, based on this study, the top 30 noun collocations of each word including a combination of frequency and the MI score are counted. It is noteworthy that the MI score used to measure the strength of collocation should be greater than or equal to three which is the significance value for collocational association (Cheng, 2012).

### **3.4 Data Collection**

1) Two online dictionaries, which are the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE) and Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD), were used to collect the definitions of the three synonyms.

2) The three synonyms were investigated in terms of the distribution of different genres in COCA.

3) The noun collocations of each word were searched from the COCA. The top-30 frequency list which often co-occur with each word were selected based on the collocational strength which is determined by the frequency and the Mutual Information (MI) scores that are  $\geq 3$ .

4) In analyzing the similarities and differences between the synonyms, the selected noun collocations were classified into several themes based on their semantic preference. Then, 100 concordance lines of *real*, *genuine*, and *authentic* were analyzed in terms of the semantic prosody which acts as a subset of the semantic preference.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

The distinctions between the three synonyms, *real*, *genuine*, and *authentic* regarding three aspects were analyzed through the following steps.

First of all, the definitions and the sample sentences provided in the two online dictionaries were examined in order to find the similarities and differences in meaning. In the next step, the use of each word in different genres were examined based on their distribution and frequency. As for the noun collocations, the top-30 frequency list that often co-occur with each synonymous adjectives were looked at regarding the frequency and MI scores that are  $\geq 3$ . Then, each word was categorized into groups of semantic preferences. After that, 100 concordance lines of each *real*, *genuine*, and *authentic* randomized from COCA were selected for analysis in terms of the semantic prosody in order to compare and contrast. The information demonstrated how each word is associated with positive and negative senses through the frequent occurrences with certain noun collocations.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To answer the research question, this chapter demonstrates the similarities and differences in meanings first, followed by the distribution across eight different genres and the common noun collocations that often co-occur with the three synonymous adjectives: *real*, *genuine*, and *authentic*.

#### 4.1 Similarities and Differences in Meaning

**Table 1**

*Definition of Real, Genuine, and Authentic from Two Online Dictionaries*

| Words       | Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE)  | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD)   |
|-------------|---|---|
| <b>Real</b> | <p>1. Something that is real exists and is important.</p> <p><u>Example</u><br/><i>There is a <b>real</b> danger that the disease might spread.</i></p> <p>2. Something that is real is actually what it seems to be and not false or artificial.</p> <p><u>Example</u><br/><i>She had never seen a <b>real</b> live elephant before.</i></p> <p>3. Actual and true, not invented</p> <p><u>Example</u><br/><i>What was the <b>real</b> reason you quit your job?</i></p> <p>4. A real thing has all the qualities you expect something of that type to have.</p> <p><u>Example</u><br/><i>Simon was her first <b>real</b> boyfriend.</i></p> | <p>1. Actually existing or happening and not imagined or pretended</p> <p><u>Example</u><br/><i>Politicians seem to be out of touch with the <b>real</b> world.</i></p> <p>2. Not false or artificial</p> <p><u>Example</u><br/><i>Are those <b>real</b> flowers?</i></p> <p>3. Actual or true, rather than what appears to be true</p> <p><u>Example</u><br/><i>The <b>real</b> story is even more amazing.</i></p> <p>4. Having all the important qualities that it should have to deserve to be called what it is called</p> <p><u>Example</u><br/><i>She never had any <b>real</b> friends at school.</i></p> |

|                  |   |   |
|------------------|---|---|
|                  | <p>5. A real increase or decrease in an amount of money is one you calculate by including the general decrease in the value of money over a period of time</p> <p><u>Example</u><br/><i>The average value of salaries has fallen in <b>real</b> terms.</i></p>  | <p>5. When the effect of such things as price rises on the power of money to buy things is included in the sums</p> <p><u>Example</u><br/><i>The <b>real</b> value of the country's exports has grown little since the 1970s.</i></p>   |
| <b>Genuine</b>   | <p>1. A genuine feeling, desire etc. is one that you really feel, not one you pretend to feel</p> <p><u>Example</u><br/><i>The reforms are motivated by a <b>genuine</b> concern for the disabled.</i></p> <p>2. Something genuine really is what it seems to be.</p> <p><u>Example</u><br/><i>The strap is <b>genuine</b> leather.</i></p> <p>3. Someone who is genuine is honest and friendly and you feel you can trust them</p> <p><u>Example</u><br/><i>She is the most <b>genuine</b> person I've ever met.</i></p> | <p>1. Real; exactly what it appears to be; not artificial</p> <p><u>Example</u><br/><i>Is the painting a <b>genuine</b> Picasso?</i></p> <p>2. Sincere and honest; that can be trusted.</p> <p><u>Example</u><br/><i>She always showed <b>genuine</b> concern for others.</i></p>   |
| <b>Authentic</b> | <p>1. Done or made in the traditional or original way</p> <p><u>Example</u><br/><i><b>Authentic</b> French food</i></p> <p>2. Based on facts</p> <p><u>Example</u><br/><i>An <b>authentic</b> account</i></p> <p>3. Used to describe a copy that is the same as, or as good as, the original</p> <p><u>Example</u><br/><i>Actors dressed in <b>authentic</b> costumes re-enact the battle.</i></p>  | <p>1. Known to be real and what somebody claims it is and not a copy</p> <p><u>Example</u><br/><i>I don't know if the painting is <b>authentic</b>.</i></p> <p>2. True and accurate</p> <p><u>Example</u><br/><i>The <b>authentic</b> voice of young black Americans</i></p> <p>3. Made to be exactly the same as the original</p> <p><u>Example</u><br/><i>An <b>authentic</b> model of the ancient town</i></p> |

Based on the definitions retrieved from the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE) and the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD), Table 1 shows that *real*, *genuine* and *authentic* tend to have the similar core meaning, i.e. '*real or what it seems to be.*' However, there are some differences in the senses of meaning. As shown in the table, *real* can be used to describe to an amount of money that a person can calculate by taking into account the overall decline in the value of money over a period of time (e.g., *real terms*), and it may also be used to define '*the important qualities that it should have to justify what it is called*' (e.g., *real friends*). In addition, in terms of use, *real* can be used with both concrete and abstract nouns, such as *reason* or *a boyfriend*. Meanwhile, *genuine* can refer to '*a real feeling that a person really feels or a feeling of a person that is very sincere and honest*' (e.g., *genuine person*). Also, *authentic* can refer to '*a real thing which is claimed to resemble the original.*' (e.g., *authentic model*) or '*a thing that is made in traditional way.*' (e.g., *authentic food*)

As aforementioned, it is clearly seen that the terms *real*, *genuine*, and *authentic* do not have the exact same definitions due to some different senses of meanings, so they cannot replace each other in all contexts. That is, therefore, consistent with the suggestions of Jackson and Amvela (2000) that the three synonyms are *loose synonyms*.

#### 4.2 Degree of Formality

To have a clearer picture of the general use of *real*, *genuine* and *authentic*, the results of the overall frequency and the distribution across eight genres from COCA were presented in Table 2 and Table 3 as follows.

**Table 2**

*Overall Frequency of Real, Genuine, and Authentic across the Eight Genres from COCA*

| Genre            | <i>Real</i> |             | <i>Genuine</i> |             | <i>Authentic</i> |             | Total |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|-------|
|                  | Frequency   | Per Million | Frequency      | Per Million | Frequency        | Per Million |       |
| <b>Blog</b>      | 57,131      | 444.21      | 3,109          | 22.94       | 1,647            | 12.81       |       |
| <b>Web</b>       | 48,668      | 391.68      | 2,947          | 25.02       | 1,516            | 12.20       |       |
| <b>TV</b>        | 59,507      | 464.63      | 2,950          | 6.67        | 616              | 4.81        |       |
| <b>Spoken</b>    | 51,400      | 407.50      | 2,325          | 12.15       | 886              | 7.02        |       |
| <b>Fiction</b>   | 34,728      | 293.50      | 2,004          | 16.95       | 701              | 5.92        |       |
| <b>Magazines</b> | 39,067      | 309.83      | 1,679          | 18.45       | 1,700            | 13.48       |       |

|                 |                |        |               |       |               |       |                |
|-----------------|----------------|--------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|----------------|
| <b>News</b>     | 35,818         | 294.21 | 1,530         | 13.79 | 1,189         | 9.77  |                |
| <b>Academic</b> | 23,732         | 198.11 | 854           | 24.61 | 3,353         | 27.99 |                |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>350,051</b> |        | <b>17,405</b> |       | <b>11,608</b> |       | <b>379,064</b> |

From Table 2, *real* occurs with the highest frequency in the corpus data (350,051 tokens), while *genuine* and *authentic* are less frequent respectively (17,405 and 11,608 tokens).

**Table 3**

*Distribution of Real, Genuine, and Authentic across the Eight Genres from COCA*

| Genre            | <i>Real</i>    |             | Genre            | <i>Genuine</i> |             | Genre            | <i>Authentic</i> |             |
|------------------|----------------|-------------|------------------|----------------|-------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|
|                  | Frequency      | Per Million |                  | Frequency      | Per Million |                  | Frequency        | Per Million |
| <b>TV</b>        | 59,507         | 464.63      | <b>Webpages</b>  | 3,109          | 25.02       | <b>Academic</b>  | 3,353            | 27.99       |
| <b>Blog</b>      | 57,131         | 444.21      | <b>Blog</b>      | 2,950          | 22.94       | <b>Magazine</b>  | 1,700            | 13.48       |
| <b>Spoken</b>    | 51,400         | 407.50      | <b>Academic</b>  | 2,948          | 24.61       | <b>Blog</b>      | 1,647            | 12.81       |
| <b>Webpages</b>  | 48,668         | 391.68      | <b>Magazine</b>  | 2,326          | 18.45       | <b>Webpages</b>  | 1,516            | 12.20       |
| <b>Magazine</b>  | 39,067         | 309.83      | <b>Fiction</b>   | 2,006          | 16.95       | <b>Newspaper</b> | 1,189            | 9.77        |
| <b>Newspaper</b> | 35,818         | 294.21      | <b>Newspaper</b> | 1,679          | 13.79       | <b>Spoken</b>    | 886              | 7.02        |
| <b>Fiction</b>   | 34,728         | 293.50      | <b>Spoken</b>    | 1,533          | 12.15       | <b>Fiction</b>   | 701              | 5.92        |
| <b>Academic</b>  | 23,732         | 198.11      | <b>TV</b>        | 854            | 6.67        | <b>TV</b>        | 616              | 4.81        |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>350,051</b> |             |                  | <b>17,405</b>  |             |                  | <b>11,608</b>    |             |

In Table 3, *real* is more associated with informal English as it is found most frequently in informal contexts. Particularly, *real* occurs with the highest frequency in the TV and movies genre (59,507 tokens), blog (57,131), spoken (51,400), which are considered to be informal English genres. While, the occurrences of *real* are the lowest number in academic texts (23,732), fiction (34,728) and newspapers (35,818). Concerning the words *genuine* and *authentic*, these words have the highest level of formality due to their frequent use in formal English genres. Specifically, *genuine* is most frequent in webpages (3,109), blog (2,950), and academic texts (2,948), meanwhile, *authentic* appears mostly in academic texts (3,353), magazine (1,700) and blog (1,647). In their lowest frequency, both *genuine* and *authentic* are the least frequent in TV and movies subtitles which are considered as informal genres (854 and 616 respectively).

Regarding formality, *genuine* and *authentic* seem to be more formal than *real*, as indicated by their frequency in the formal English genres. While, *real* is more commonly used in spoken contexts.

### 4.3 Noun Collocations

This section presented the common noun collocations that often co-occur with *real*, *genuine* and *authentic*.

**Table 4**

*Top-30 Frequency List of Noun Collocations of Real, Genuine, and Authentic in COCA*

| Rank | <i>Real</i>    |           |          | <i>Genuine</i> |           |          | <i>Authentic</i> |           |          |
|------|----------------|-----------|----------|----------------|-----------|----------|------------------|-----------|----------|
|      | Noun collocate | Frequency | MI Score | Noun collocate | Frequency | MI Score | Noun Collocate   | Frequency | MI Score |
| 1    | estate         | 24,643    | 10.78    | interest       | 283       | 6.77     | Experience       | 366       | 4.08     |
| 2    | world          | 10,986    | 5.44     | concern        | 250       | 7.71     | Assessment       | 261       | 5.64     |
| 3    | life           | 10,391    | 5.35     | article        | 197       | 6.38     | Self             | 232       | 5.75     |
| 4    | name           | 4,666     | 5.38     | Love           | 153       | 4.13     | Learning         | 205       | 5.04     |
| 5    | problem        | 4,560     | 5.36     | Smile          | 114       | 6.71     | Voice            | 145       | 3.10     |
| 6    | thing          | 4,015     | 4.31     | Desire         | 104       | 6.84     | Cuisine          | 76        | 7.09     |
| 7    | reason         | 2,548     | 5.08     | affection      | 93        | 9.23     | Context          | 71        | 3.47     |
| 8    | question       | 2,414     | 4.51     | Sense          | 86        | 4.44     | Task             | 62        | 3.00     |
| 9    | issue          | 2,137     | 4.89     | Fear           | 72        | 5.31     | Expression       | 61        | 3.49     |
| 10   | deal           | 1,867     | 4.66     | human          | 72        | 3.99     | Document         | 60        | 3.27     |
| 11   | story          | 1,662     | 3.88     | dialogue       | 66        | 7.31     | Teaching         | 60        | 3.71     |
| 12   | person         | 1,481     | 3.82     | Effort         | 66        | 5.26     | Dish             | 49        | 3.80     |
| 13   | job            | 1,394     | 3.66     | American       | 65        | 3.13     | Tradition        | 48        | 3.12     |
| 14   | money          | 1,350     | 3.13     | Peace          | 63        | 5.31     | Setting          | 44        | 3.24     |
| 15   | sense          | 1,294     | 4.03     | person         | 63        | 3.60     | Flavor           | 43        | 4.40     |
| 16   | change         | 1,274     | 3.47     | reform         | 59        | 4.99     | Dialogue         | 41        | 4.12     |
| 17   | threat         | 1,070     | 5.64     | feeling        | 58        | 4.69     | representation   | 40        | 4.07     |
| 18   | danger         | 1,034     | 6.16     | pleasure       | 57        | 6.32     | Emotion          | 37        | 3.31     |
| 19   | difference     | 1,023     | 4.64     | democracy      | 54        | 6.06     | Artifact         | 35        | 5.04     |
| 20   | power          | 1,003     | 3.15     | surprise       | 54        | 5.68     | Costume          | 33        | 4.25     |
| 21   | possibility    | 997       | 5.80     | progress       | 51        | 5.61     | Instrument       | 32        | 3.05     |
| 22   | challenge      | 961       | 5.13     | emotion        | 48        | 7.37     | Existence        | 32        | 3.12     |
| 23   | value          | 896       | 4.34     | commitment     | 47        | 6.13     | Recipe           | 27        | 3.08     |
| 24   | trouble        | 780       | 4.60     | understanding  | 47        | 4.82     | Feel             | 25        | 3.73     |
| 25   | concern        | 754       | 4.97     | respect        | 45        | 4.83     | Cooking          | 25        | 3.85     |
| 26   | food           | 711       | 3.13     | enthusiasm     | 43        | 7.40     | Spirituality     | 25        | 5.43     |
| 27   | interest       | 670       | 3.69     | connection     | 43        | 5.63     | Inquiry          | 21        | 3.50     |
| 28   | chance         | 662       | 3.67     | threat         | 43        | 5.33     | Replica          | 21        | 5.89     |
| 29   | test           | 636       | 3.70     | curiosity      | 41        | 7.54     | Gospel           | 20        | 3.42     |
| 30   | property       | 590       | 4.39     | risk           | 41        | 4.14     | Accent           | 19        | 3.80     |

Table 4 presents the top 30 noun collocations that often co-occur with the three target words based on their frequency and MI scores ( $\geq 3$ ). This could be classified into groups of semantic preferences due to their semantic similarities. The semantic preference is known as the regular co-occurrence of a lexical item with the items expressing a specific evaluative value (Hunston, 2002) Hence, the understanding of collocations can help establish the connections between the searched terms and the semantic relationship of their collocates.

**Table 5**

*Semantic Preference of Noun Collocations of 'Real'*

| <b>Themes</b>           | <b>Noun Collocations</b>                                       |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>1. LIFE</b>          | life, person   |
| <b>2. POSSIBILITY</b>   | chance, possibility  |
| <b>3. OBSTACLE</b>      | problem, issue, threat, danger, trouble, challenge, difference |
| <b>4. FEELING</b>       | sense, concern, interest                                       |
| <b>5. FINANCE</b>       | estate, money, value, property, deal, power                    |
| <b>6. TEST</b>          | test, question   |
| <b>7. OBJECT</b>        | food, thing  |
| <b>8. MISCELLANEOUS</b> | change, job, reason, name, world, story                        |

As shown in Table 5, the noun collocations of *real* were categorized into eight themes, namely LIFE, POSSIBILITY, OBSTACLE, FEELING, FINANCE, TEST, OBJECT and MISCELLANEOUS. The majority of its noun collocations is expressed by positive sense.

Their core meanings are associated with the sense of '*something that is actually existing or happening and not imagined or pretended*', as demonstrated by the first set of noun collocations, LIFE, with *life* and *person* being its members, as exemplified in (1).

(1) It's the same feeling you get when you see a Van Gogh in *real life*, or the first time you heard The Joshua.

The second theme, POSSIBILITY, suggests the same sense of meaning, containing the nouns *chance* and *possibility* as shown in (2).

(2) I was drastically behind on my word count, and I was facing the *real possibility* of missing my deadline... again.

The third theme OBSTACLE shows the noun collocations signifying negative meaning which are *problem, issue, threat, danger, trouble, challenge, and difference* as can be seen in the contexts where these nouns appear, exemplified in (3).

(3) There is a *real danger* that we'll fall off the inflation cliff eventually. No doubt.

The fourth theme, FEELING, refers to 'a *real feeling or emotion that one is experiencing*', containing the nouns *sense, concern, and interest* as exemplified in (4).

(4) I got a *real sense* of achievement when my work was first published.

The fifth theme, FINANCE, contains the collocations, *estate, money, value, property, deal, and power*, all of which are mostly used specifically in the business field and commonly used as compound nouns. For example, *real estate* and *real property*, as exemplified in (5).

(5) The Muslims are able to buy such expensive Manhattan *real estate*, and build huge buildings on it.

The sixth theme, TEST, contains the nouns *test* and *question* which usually refer to 'an *important point that needs to be considered*', as exemplified in (6).

(6) People are already saying bad things about you. The *real question* is whether or not you want to know about it.

The seventh theme, OBJECT, contains the group of a physical object with the collocations: *food* and *thing*.

The last theme is the group of MISCELLANEOUS containing the noun collocations: *change, job, reason, name, world, and story*.

**Table 6**

*Semantic Preference of Noun Collocations of 'Genuine'*

| <b>Themes</b>           | <b>Noun Collocations</b>  |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>1. LIFE</b>          | human, person, American   |
| <b>2. OBSTACLE</b>      | threat, risk  |
| <b>3. FEELING</b>       | interest, concern, love, smile, desire, affection, sense, fear, feeling, pleasure, surprise, emotion, understanding, respect, enthusiasm, curiosity |
| <b>4. POLITICS</b>      | democracy, reform, peace, commitment  |
| <b>5. MISCELLANEOUS</b> | connection, progress, effort, dialogue, article   |

As shown in Table 6, the noun collocations of *genuine* were categorized into five themes, namely LIFE, OBSTACLE, FEELING, POLITICS, and MISCELLANEOUS.

The first theme, LIFE, contains the nouns *human*, *person*, and *American* describing in the sense of 'real and actually existing.' Specifically, as shown in (7), the noun *human* can be used to modify the other noun as in 'genuine human knowledge' or 'genuine human need.'

(7) Real money is not a government invention; it systematically arises out of a ***genuine human*** need.

The second theme, OBSTACLE, contains the nouns *threat* and *risk* as the collocations of *Genuine* to refer to 'a real and serious situation that could inflict harm', as exemplified in (8)

(8) We will be ready to repel any clear and present danger that poses a ***genuine threat*** to our national security and survival.

The third theme, FEELING, has the highest number of noun collocations: *interest*, *concern*, *love*, *smile*, *desire*, *affection*, *sense*, *fear*, *feeling*, *pleasure*, *surprise*, *emotion*, *understanding*, *respect*, *enthusiasm*, and *curiosity*. These words were used

specifically to indicate in the sense of ‘*a feeling, sincere or desire that one feels and not pretend to feel*’, as exemplified in (9).

(9) And even as she chewed me out, she was looking at me with such ***genuine affection***.

The fourth theme, POLITICS, contains the nouns *democracy, reform, peace,* and *commitment* which are used specifically in the political field as exemplified in (10).

(10) Amongst the problems in the contemporary Middle East is the lack of ***genuine democracy*** which U.S. and British foreign policy has actually been deliberately obstructing.

The last theme is the group of MISCELLANEOUS containing the noun collocations: *connection, progress, effort, dialogue,* and *article*.

**Table 7**

*Semantic Preference of Noun Collocations of ‘Authentic’*

| <b>Themes</b>           | <b>Noun Collocations</b>                                |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>1. LIFE</b>          | experience, self, existence, spirituality               |
| <b>2. EDUCATION</b>     | assessment, learning, task, teaching, document, inquiry |
| <b>3. FEELING</b>       | expression, emotion, feel                               |
| <b>4. CUISINE</b>       | cuisine, dish, flavor, recipe, cooking                  |
| <b>5. IDENTITY</b>      | tradition, accent, voice, dialogue, setting             |
| <b>6. ARTIFACT</b>      | artifact, costume, instrument, replica                  |
| <b>7. MISCELLANEOUS</b> | context, representation, Gospel                         |

As shown in Table 7, the noun collocations of *authentic* were categorized into seven themes, namely LIFE, EDUCATION, FEELING, CUISINE, IDENTITY, ARTIFACT and MISCELLANEOUS. The majority of its noun collocations signifies

positive meanings associated with the sense of ‘*something that has been done or made in the traditional or original way.*’

The first theme, LIFE, demonstrates the sense of true self and personal values which can serve as guiding principles in peoples’ lives with *experience, self, existence, spirituality* being its collocates, as exemplified in (11).

(11) I realized this very important lesson on being your ***authentic self*** and " keeping it real " after many years of worrying about others'

The second theme, EDUCATION, refers to a variety of educational and instructional techniques, containing the nouns *assessment, learning, task, teaching, document, inquiry* as shown in (12).

(12) evidence of what their students have learned. Our hope is that this insistence on ***authentic assessments*** will lead itself to the use of active learning.

The third theme, FEELING, contains the nouns *expression, emotion, feel*, which conveys a sincere or spontaneous response to the eliciting situation as exemplified in (13).

(13) so I don't blame you if you feel angry. That's an ***authentic emotion***. I encourage you to go ahead and experience it.

The fourth theme, CUISINE, contains the collocations *cuisine, dish, flavor, recipe* and *cooking*. All of which are used to reflect a culture’s traditions that meet its description of what it claims to be, as exemplified in (14).

(14) Olive Garden restaurants are sending chefs to Italy to learn ***authentic cooking***.

The fifth theme, IDENTITY, contains the collocations *tradition, accent, voice, dialogue, setting* which are used to refer to the custom or way of doing something that has existed for a long time, as exemplified in (15).

(15) Once things have burned to the ground, the ***authentic voice*** of the indigenous peoples, unsullied by Western influence, can speak.

The sixth theme, ARTIFACT, contains the nouns *artifact, costume, instrument, and replica* which usually refer to a simple object which has a characteristic of an earlier time. Sometimes, it is used to signify that the object is as good as the original, exemplified in (16).

(16) in our area, the local historical society provides teachers with trunks containing *authentic artifacts* from particular periods in history.

The last theme is the group of MISCELLANEOUS containing the noun collocations: *context*, *representation*, and *Gospel*

**Table 8**

*Comparison of Themes between 'Real', 'Genuine', and 'Authentic'*

| <b>Real and Genuine</b>                        | <b>Genuine and Authentic</b>    | <b>Real and Authentic</b> | <b>Real, Genuine and Authentic</b> |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| FEELING<br>( <i>sense, concern, interest</i> ) | FEELING<br>( <i>emotion</i> )   |                           |                                    |
| OBSTACLE<br>( <i>threat</i> )                  | IDENTITY<br>( <i>dialogue</i> ) |                           |                                    |
| LIFE<br>( <i>person</i> )                      |                                 |                           |                                    |

Following an investigation of the semantic preference through the noun collocations of the three target words, clear differences can be seen from the categories of collocations. Since *real* had more collocations categories than *genuine* and *authentic*, it could be inferred that *real* might be used with a number of nouns in different contexts. While, *genuine* and *authentic* are only applicable in a few contexts. However, the similarities between the three synonyms are also presented in terms of the grouped themes as shown in Table 8, namely FEELING, OBSTACLE, LIFE and IDENTITY. From the table, the high frequency of nouns that could be collocated with both *real* and *genuine* are from the themes: FEELING, OBSTACLE, and LIFE. At the same time, some noun collocations from the grouped themes FEELING and IDENTITY are found between the words *genuine* and *authentic*. In addition, there are no noun collocations between *real* and *authentic*. This confirms the status of synonymy of the synonyms, that they can be used interchangeably only in some contexts where they have the common shared noun collocations.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents (1) a summary of the study, (2) a summary of the findings, (3) conclusion, (4) recommendations and (5) pedagogical implications of the study.

#### 5.1 Summary of the Study

##### 5.1.1 Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to investigate the similarities and differences between synonymous adjectives *real*, *genuine*, and *authentic* in terms of meaning, degree of formality, and noun collocations.

##### 5.1.2 Selected Synonyms

The three synonymous adjectives *real*, *genuine*, and *authentic* were studied in this study. The basic information was drawn from two online dictionaries: LDOCE and OALD in order to search for the definitions and sentence examples for the target words. To explore more information regarding the degree of formality and their common nouns collocations, the COCA software was used as the main source to collect the data. Due to the specific characteristics of each word, their noun collocations were categorized into the top-30 frequency list and group of semantic preference. For in-depth analysis, the total of 100 concordance lines of each *real*, *genuine*, and *authentic* were looked at by focusing on a semantic environment in which words are typically used.

#### 5.2 Summary of the Findings

The result of the present study indicates that *real*, *genuine* and *authentic* are loose synonyms. Although their core meanings are similar, this does not imply that they can be used interchangeably in the same situation. Aside from the associative meanings that each of the synonyms has, they can be differentiated through the use of formality and collocations. Specifically, *real* is the most common in informal contexts, while *genuine* and *authentic* are more associated with formal contexts due to the strong tendency in academic genres. Furthermore, some of the target words share common

collocations which could be categorized into grouped themes. That is, the themes, FEELING (i.e., *sense, concern, interest*), OBSTACLE (i.e., *threat*), and LIFE (i.e., *person*) are the categories that *real* and *genuine* share. The themes, FEELING (i.e., *emotion*) and IDENTITY (i.e., *dialogue*) were shared by *genuine* and *authentic*. However, *real* and *authentic* do not share any noun collocations from the frequency lists. This implies that each of the target words is used in different contexts according to different senses of meaning.

### 5.3 Conclusion

The following presents the summary of the findings in three aspects: the similarities and differences in meaning, degree of formality and collocations.

#### 5.3.1 Definitions from Dictionaries

According to the information drawn from two online dictionaries, *real*, *genuine* and *authentic* are similar in their core meanings as they share the denotational meaning of ‘*real exists or what it seems to be*’. However, based on LDOCE and OALD, the three target words also share some differences in the senses of meaning, *genuine* can be used to refer to sincerity and honesty, the qualities of being real with people through words and actions. At the same time, *authentic* can be used to describe something that is made in an original way and has a good quality similar to the original one. Thus, on the basis of the above mentioned, *real*, *genuine*, and *authentic* do not have the exact definitions, so they cannot be used interchangeably in all contexts.

#### 5.3.2 Degree of Formality

In terms of the distribution and frequency, *real* occurs with the highest frequency in the corpus data (350,051 tokens), whereas *genuine* and *authentic* are less frequent (17,405 and 11,608 tokens). Regarding the formality, *real* is more associated with informal English as it is found most frequently in TV and movies genre which is considered as informal English genre. Whereas, *genuine* and *authentic* have the highest degree of formality due to the fact that the formal English genres use them the most frequently, such as in academic texts, webpages and blog. According to this, *genuine* and *authentic* seem to be more formal than the word *real*, as indicated by their

frequency in the formal English genres. While, *real* is more commonly used in informal contexts which can be found in daily life and activities.

### 5.3.3 Collocations

*Real*, *genuine* and *authentic* show differences in collocational properties, and they can be analyzed into several themes. *Real* can be categorized into eight themes, namely LIFE, POSSIBILITY, OBSTACLE, FEELING, FINANCE, TEST, OBJECT, and MISCELLANEOUS. *Real* shows the highest number of collocation categories. *Genuine* was classified into five themes, namely LIFE, OBSTACLE, FEELING, POLITICS, and MISCELLANEOUS. *Authentic* was classified into seven themes, namely LIFE, EDUCATION, FEELING, CUISINE, IDENTITY, ARTIFACT, and MISCELLANEOUS.

From what was mentioned above, there were shared noun collocations between the three target words which were part of the grouped themes, namely FEELING, OBSTACLE, LIFE and IDENTITY. The themes, FEELING (i.e., *sense, concern, interest*), OBSTACLE (i.e., *threat*), and LIFE (i.e., *person*) were composed of the group of words that often co-occurs with both *real* and *genuine*. While, the themes FEELING (i.e., *emotion*) and IDENTITY (i.e., *dialogue*) were shared between the words *genuine* and *authentic*. However, there are no words that are shared between *real*, *genuine*, *authentic*. It can be inferred that each of them is used in different contexts according to their senses of meaning. Hence, it could be summarized that *real*, *genuine*, and *authentic* are loose synonyms because they have similar meanings but they cannot be used in the contexts interchangeably due to some differences in semantic environments.

### 5.4 Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research

In accordance with the results, this study revealed some limitations and recommendations for further research studies. The first one deals with the top-30 frequency list of noun collocations of each English synonym mentioned in this study, which may exclude some identical words or other words in the new interesting group of semantic preference. So, in order to generate a more thorough and comprehensive picture of the collocational patterns of the synonyms, the further research may scrutinize and gather additional common word lists beyond the top-30 list. Another

limitation of this study is the lack of an analysis of EFL learners' use of synonyms in different contexts. According to this, the further research may consider an error analysis of EFL learners to see whether they select word choices of these synonyms correctly or incorrectly in each particular context.

### **5.5 Pedagogical Implications**

It is inevitable to say that a dictionary alone may not provide inclusive usage of each English synonym. Regarding the results of this present study, it shows that the data from a corpus could provide additional information beyond a dictionary. That is, a corpus allows English language learners to acquire the authentic data of language patterns, including collocations, grammatical patterns, semantic preference and distribution across genres which enables them to understand the subtle usage of the words they are interested in.

Especially in the area of English language teaching, the use of corpora also has an impact on material development as it is a useful teaching tool to enhance learners' metalinguistic awareness through investigating concordance lines and collocation patterns (Shaw, 2011). Furthermore, learning new vocabulary through concordance lines and collocation patterns is considered to achieve more effective learning outcomes than providing only a single word (Jirananthiporn, 2018) since they could provide the authentic language use in both written and spoken contexts. Moreover, it would be beneficial for learners to know the distribution and frequency of each word provided in the corpus since they provide useful information about the frequency of words across different genres whether they are more formal, informal or somewhere in between. This kind of information allows the learners to compare the differences and similarities between each synonym, therefore, it means that they can also find the most appropriate word for a particular context which reduces the errors in selecting vocabulary and eventually overcomes difficulties in distinguishing loose synonyms.

## REFERENCES

- Aroonmanakun, V. (2015). *Quick or fast: A corpus based study of English synonyms* [Master's thesis, Thammasat University].
- Asgari, A. and Mustapha, A. B. (2011) The type of vocabulary learning strategies used by ESL students in University Putra Malaysia. *English Language Teaching* 4(2): 84-90.
- Bennett, R. G. (2010). *Using corpora in the language learning classroom: Corpus linguistics for teachers*. Michigan ELT.
- Bonkrathok, R. (2018). *A corpus-based study of the synonyms: Convey and express* [Master's thesis, Thammasat University].
- Cambridge advanced learner's Dictionary (2009). Cambridge University Press.
- Cheng, W. (2012). *Exploring corpus linguistics. Language in action*. Routledge.
- Chung, S. (2011). A corpus-based analysis of "Create" and "Produce." *Chang Gung Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(2). 399-425.
- Fromkin, V., & Rodman, R. (1998). *An introduction to language*. Harcourt Brace College.
- Hunston, S. (2002). *Corpora in applied linguistics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Insa-ard, P. (2021). A Corpus-based study on the meanings, distribution, collocations, and formality of 'Concentrate', 'Emphasize', and 'Focus'. *ResearchGate*, 22-40. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/357991769\\_A\\_Corpus-based\\_Study\\_on\\_the\\_Meanings\\_Distribution\\_Collocations\\_and\\_Formality\\_of\\_'Concentrate'\\_Emphasize'\\_and\\_'Focus'](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/357991769_A_Corpus-based_Study_on_the_Meanings_Distribution_Collocations_and_Formality_of_'Concentrate'_Emphasize'_and_'Focus')
- Jackson, H., & Amvela, E. (2000). *Words, meaning and vocabulary: Meaning relations*. Atheneum Press.
- Jarunwaraphan, B., & Mallikamas, P. (2020). A Corpus-based study of English synonyms: Chance and opportunity. *REFlections*, 27(2), 218-245. <https://so05.tcithaijo.org/index.php/reflections/article/view/248710>
- Jirananthiporn, S. (2018). Is this problem giving you trouble? A corpus-based examination of the differences between the nouns problem and trouble. *Thoughts*, 2, 1-25. <https://so06.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/thoughts/article/view/>

163389

- Kiatthanakul, T. (2015). *A corpus-based study of the English synonyms: Achieve, accomplish, and attain* [Master's thesis, Thammasat University].
- Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English: LDOCE. (n.d.). Available online at <https://www.ldoceonline.com>.
- Ly, T. H., & Jung, C. K. (2015). A corpus investigation: The similarities and differences of 'cute', 'pretty' and 'beautiful'. *The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 21(3), 125-140. <https://ejournal.ukm.my/31/article/view/8788>
- Nesselhauf, N. (2011). *Corpus linguistics: A practical introduction*. Retrieved from <http://www.as.uni-heidelberg.de/personen/Nesselhauf/files/>
- Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. (n.d.). Available online at <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com>.
- Ozaki, S. (2012). Analysis on the use of synonymous adverbs: Maybe, perhaps, possibly, probably, and likely. *Journal of Nagoya Bunri University*, 12, 75- 88.
- Panyapayatjati, C. (2016). *A corpus-based study of the English verbs synonyms: Grieve, mourn and regret* [Master's thesis, Thammasat University].
- Phitayakorn, W. (2016). *A corpus-based study of the synonyms: Advice, recommend, and suggest* [Master's thesis, Thammasat University].
- Phoocharoensil, S. (2010). A corpus-based study of English synonyms. *International Journal of Arts and Sciences*, 3(10), 227-245.
- Phoocharoensil, S. (2020). Collocational patterns of the near-synonyms error, fault, and mistake. *The International Journal of Communication and Linguistic Studies*, 19(1), 1-17.
- Phoocharoensil, S. (2020). A genre and collocational analysis of 'consequence', 'result', and 'outcome'. *The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 26(3), 1-16. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17576/3L-2020-2603-01>
- Shaw, E. M. (2011). *Teaching vocabulary through data-driven learning*. Brigham Young University.
- Sormet, R. (2017). *A corpus-based study of the English synonyms almost, virtually, and practically* [Master's thesis, Thammasat University].
- Szudarski, P. (2018). *Corpus linguistics for vocabulary: A guide for research*. Routledge.

- Taylor, J. (2002). Near synonyms as co-extensive categories: 'high' and 'tall' revisited. *Language Sciences*, 25(3), p. 263-284.
- Tharanatham, P. (2013). *A corpus-based analysis of English synonyms: Remember, recall, recollect* [Master's thesis, Thammasat University].
- Webb, S. (2007). The effect of synonymy on second-language vocabulary. *Learning Reading in a Foreign Language*, 19, 120-136.
- Wongrat, K. (2018). *A Corpus-based analysis of English synonymous verbs: Predict and forecast* [Master's thesis, Thammasat University].

