Near-Synonyms: Exploration and Implications

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Article information	
Abstract	Most of the synonymous words in English can be found as loose or near synonyms. There have been many synonymous words that have been explored by many researchers (Aroonmanakun, 2015; Cai, 2012; Chalermsook, 2015; Chung, 2011; Gu, 2017; Musikarn, 2016; Panyapayatjati, 2016; Petcharat & Phoocharoensil, 2017; Pimjuntug, 2015; Phoocharoensil, 2020; Srithanyarat, 2016; Supachai, 2015; Wongrat, 2019; Yang, 2016). The features in the methodology section and the approaches used in extracting the similarities and differences of the synonyms in most studies range from corpus-based analysis such as degree of formality, collocations, colligation or grammatical patterns, to semantic analysis such as semantic preference, semantic prosody, and componential analysis. This paper aims to investigate the features in the methodology section, the approaches, and the tools used in extracting synonymous words. The results and the implications to the classroom are also investigated. This will provide insightful information on the characteristics of the synonymous words, how to classify them, and which features in the methodology section or approaches in classifying synonyms are efficient and which are not. Furthermore, implication to classrooms is advised.

Keywords	Near-synonyms, synonymous words
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1. Introduction

Synonyms can be confusing for most L2 students. Selecting the right words in the right context is difficult for these students (Kongcharoen & Thummanuruk, 2023). Many researchers took this issue into account and did much research on distinguishing the synonyms.

Synonyms can be classified into two types, which are strict or absolute synonyms and loose or near synonyms (Phoocharoensil, 2010). Strict or absolute synonyms mean they are interchangeable in all contexts. This type of synonym is rarely found since it was believed that if the words are interchangeable in every context, the previous one would chronologically disappear. On the other hand, loose or near synonyms mean words that share some core meanings but are not interchangeable in all contexts. They show some differences in some respects. Phoocharoensil (2010) indicated that most of the synonymous words in English fall into loose or near synonyms. The recent research in near synonyms always chooses the words that either fall into the first 2000 General Service List (GSL), Academic Word List (AWL), or the first 3000 frequent words from the BNC/COCA list. This means the near-synonyms that researchers have selected to further study are those words that appear frequently in both general English and specialized contexts and are worth investigating.

Since much research on near-synonyms has been conducted, this paper, thus, aims to explore the research of synonymous words, focusing on the features in the methodology section, the approaches, and the tools used in distinguishing the near-synonyms. The results and the implications are further discussed to provide more details that can be implemented in the classrooms.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Backgrounds

The term synonym is originally from the Greek word *sunonumon*, which means having the same name (Jackson & Amvela, 2000, p.92), while the dictionary

defines the term synonym as "a word or expression that has the same or nearly the same meaning as another in the same language" (Oxford University Press, n.d.). Synonyms can be classified into two major types: strict or absolute synonyms, and loose or near synonyms (Phoocharoensil, 2010). Strict or absolute synonyms are rarely found. Most of the synonyms in the English language are loose or near synonyms. Phoocharoensil (2010) indicated that if a language starts to have a word which can completely replace another word in every context, one of them tends to change its meaning or disappear. In this case, Phoocharoensil (2010) has demonstrated an example from Fromkin et al. (2003) of the Old English word *frumsceaft,* which was later replaced by the word *creation* after the word *creation* had been borrowed from the French language. These two words had been used side by side for a while before the word *frumsceaft* started to disappear. This signified the rare case of the appearance of strict or absolute synonyms. Most of the synonyms in the English language are loose or near synonyms because they cannot be used interchangeably in all contexts (Phoocharoensil, 2010). Therefore, many researchers have been interested in classifying these near-synonyms and trying to find the best methods to differentiate them. Over the years, researchers have done much research to differentiate synonymous words with varied methods (Aroonmanakun, 2015; Cai, 2012; Chalermsook, 2015; Chung, 2011; Gu, 2017; Musikarn, 2016; Panyapayatjati, 2016; Petcharat & Phoocharoensil, 2017; Pimjuntug, 2015; Phoocharoensil, 2020; Srithanyarat, 2016; Supachai, 2015; Wongrat, 2019; Yang, 2016).

2.2 Differentiating Near-Synonyms

Synonyms can be differentiated by several methods. Many methods have been used by many researchers. In this paper, the features in the methodology section, the approaches, and the tools used for differentiating many synonyms are explored.

2.2.1 Dialects

Starting with dialects, many synonymous words are different in terms of the place they have been used. Take the words *loo, restroom, toilet*, and *lavatory* as examples. According to Oxford University Press (n.d), *loo* is a noun identified as British English and is used informally, meaning "*a toilet*", while *restroom* is also a noun identified as North American English, meaning "*a room with a toilet in a public place, such as a theater or restaurant*". *Toilet* is also a noun meaning "*a large bowl attached to a pipe that you sit on or stand over when you get rid of waste matter from your body*", while *lavatory* is a noun with the definition of old-fashioned or formal English, meaning especially in British English "*a toilet or room with a toilet in it*".

From the aforementioned example, the dictionary even indicates whether the words are American English or British English. *Loo* and *lavatory* are stated in British English in the Oxford Learner Dictionary (Oxford University Press, n.d.), while *restroom* is defined as American English. They all have the same meaning for the word *toilet.*

Dialects can be a criterion to differentiate the synonyms regarding the places where the words are used. However, it cannot provide a clear distinction of how to use it, rather than the places the words are used. There should be more research on using dialects as a tool to differentiate the synonyms to see if dialects can be used as an approach to distinguish the synonyms. From the reason provided above, dialects, therefore, are not popularly used as a criterion to distinguish the synonyms.

2.2.2 Degree of Formality

The degree of formality is a crucial criterion used by numerous researchers to distinguish synonyms. Many of these researchers rely on data extracted from the Corpus of Contemporary American English or COCA and the British National Corpus or BNC to evaluate the formality of words (Chalermsook, 2015; Petcharat

& Phoocharoensil, 2017; Pimjuntug, 2015; Phoocharoensil, 2020; Srithanyarat, 2016; Supachai, 2015). COCA comprises eight genres, including TV/Movies, Spoken, Magazines, Fiction, Blogs, Web, News, and Academic, which are employed to assess the formality of synonyms. According to Davies (2008), the TV/Movies and Spoken genres are considered informal, while the Academic genre is defined as formal. Magazines, Fiction, Blogs, Webs, and News genres fall somewhere between formal and informal.

Unlike COCA, the British National Corpus or BNC is composed of 90% written and 10% spoken language. 90% of the British National Corpus (BNC) comprises written content, including excerpts from various sources such as regional and national newspapers, specialized periodicals, journals catering to diverse age groups and interests, academic publications, popular fiction, as well as both published and unpublished letters and memoranda. This written component also includes school and university essays, among various other textual forms. The remaining 10% of the BNC is dedicated to spoken content, featuring orthographic transcriptions of unscripted informal conversations. The spoken part of the corpus includes language used in various contexts, ranging from formal business or government meetings to radio shows and phone-ins (BNC, 2022).

Though COCA and BNC can provide much information to extract the synonyms, COCA has been more popularly used among researchers than BNC. This may be because COCA has more tokens with a total of about 2 billion words, while BNC possesses only 100 million words. The corpus size may play a vital role for researchers in selecting the corpus to consult.

2.2.3 Collocations

Collocation is defined as 'a combination of words in a language that happens very often and more frequently than would happen by chance' (Oxford University Press, n.d.). Many researchers have used collocation as a criterion to distinguish the synonyms (Aroonmanakun, 2015; Cai, 2012; Chalermsook, 2015; Chung, 2011;

Gu, 2017; Musikarn, 2016; Panyapayatjati, 2016; Petcharat & Phoocharoensil, 2017; Pimjuntug, 2015; Phoocharoensil, 2020; Sirikan, 2014; Srithanyarat, 2016; Supachai, 2015; Wongrat, 2019; Yang, 2016). To identify the strong collocation, a Mutual Information or MI score has been used. MI score can signify how significantly the observed frequency of co-occurrence deviates from the expected frequency (Szudarski, 2023, P. 28). In COCA, an MI score equivalent to three or above is identified as strong collocation and has been used as the cut point to extract the synonyms (Imsa-ard & Phoocharoensil, 2022). Most researchers used the MI score equivalent to three and above and the frequency of at least two as a threshold in identifying the synonymous words (Imsa-ard & Phoocharoensil, 2022; Kongcharoen & Thummanuruk, 2023; Kongcharoen & Chinsethagij, 2025).

2.2.4 Colligation or Grammatical Patterns

The term 'colligation' has been employed in various contexts, with a diversity of meanings. It has demonstrated even more versatility than the term 'collocation'. In Firth's usage (1968, p.181), colligation referred to the syntagmatic attraction between grammatical categories such as parts of speech or syntactic functions. In contrast, collocation was considered to involve the syntagmatic attraction between lexical items. Presently, the most common understanding of colligation pertains to the attraction between a lexical item and a grammatical category, as highlighted by Sinclair (1998, p. 15), Stubbs (2001a, p. 449), and Tognini-Bonelli (2001, p. 163).

Grammatical patterns and colligation are closely related, yet they differ in their approach. In particular, colligation diverges from collocation in terms of the pattern in which words are employed. Collocation primarily relies on lexical aspects, whereas colligation is rooted in syntagmatic patterns (Flowerdew, 2012). As noted by Flowerdew (2012), colligation represents the grammatical context pattern in which a word is situated. Phoocharoensil (2010) asserted that words with synonymous meanings may not share identical grammatical patterns. This aspect has been adopted by many researchers as a criterion for distinguishing synonyms (Chalermsook, 2015; Musikarn, 2016; Panyapayatjati, 2016; Petcharat &

Phoocharoensil, 2017; Pimjuntug, 2015; Sirikan, 2014; Srithanyarat, 2016; Supachai, 2015; Tran, 2013).

2.2.5 Semantic Preference and Semantic Prosody

Semantic prosody was first coined by Sinclair (1991); however, it was most cited after Louw's (1993) discussion. Later, Stubbs (2002) coined the new term of semantic prosody as discourse prosody, which explained the association between the nod word and its associated words. Then, Stubbs (2002, P. 225) categorized discourse prosody into positive, negative, and neutral. Semantic prosody and semantic preference are closely connected to collocations, which are based on the expected association and frequency of co-occurrence between words. Collocations can also enhance the specific meaning of their constituent part (Philip, 2011, p.42). Although the words may have similar core meanings, they are always present with different collocations. When categorizing collocations into themes with semantic preference and groups with semantic prosody, the differences in their semantic relationship can be seen. Therefore, semantic prosody and semantic preference are used to indicate the different uses of the near-synonyms.

2.2.6 Componential Analysis

Componential analysis serves as a prevalent method for discerning the semantic constituents of a word. According to Nida (1979), it is a segment of text analysis focused on revealing and structuring the semantic elements within words. To define the meaning of a word, Nida (1979) suggests employing semantic markers in the form of (+) to indicate the present semantic element and (-) to indicate the absent semantic element. Aitchison (2003) also proposes that componential analysis can unveil minor components of lexis. Recently, Kongcharoen and Chinsethagij (2025) have used componential analysis in the last stage of their study to differentiate the synonymous adjectives- *calm, peaceful, silent*, and *quiet.*

2.3 Related Studies

Near synonyms have been explored by many researchers. The previous studies can be summarized and put into a table, as seen in the appendix section.

The words that researchers explored are nouns, verbs, and adjectives, with the rare presence of adverbs. The verbs explored include abandon, incite, bother, urge (Hanks, 1996); affect, influence (Lee & Liu, 2009); ask, beg, plead, request, appeal (Phoocharoensil, 2010); head, run, manage (Walker, 2011); create, produce (Chung, 2011); and want, fancy, wish (Figes, 2013); ruin, demolish, destroy (Ruenroeng, 2014); increase, raise (Chalermsook, 2015); learn, acquire (Yang, 2016); respond, reply, answer (Pimjuntug, 2015); advise, recommend, suggest (Phitayakorn, 2016); convey, express (Bonkrathok, 2018; predict, forecast (Wongrat, 2019); arrive, reach (Shahzadi et al., 2019); explain, clarify (Séguin, 2020); increase, rise (Phoocharoensil & Kanokpermpoon, 2021); persist, persevere (Phoocharoensil, 2021a); concentrate, emphasize, focus (Imsa-ard, 2021); damage, destroy (Song, 2021); teach, educate, instruct (Kruawong & Phoocharoensil, 2022); should, have to (Urunbaevna, 2022); cease, halt, stop (Chaengchenkit, 2023); join, attend, participate (Muangmeeka & Kanokpermpoon, 2023); destroy, ruin, break, obliterate, raze, annihilate, crush, devastate, wreck (Ivanova & Medvedeva, 2023); and increase, rise (Uba & Irudayasany, 2023).

The nouns investigated are opportunity, possibility, chance (Sandström, 2005); problem, trouble (Jirananthiporn, 2018); consequence, result, outcome (Phoocharoensil, 2020); chance, opportunity (Jarunwaraphan & Mallikamas, 2020); purpose, goal, objective (Lertcharoenwanich & Phoocharoensil, 2022); and people, persons (Supanfai, 2022).

The adjectives which received attention from researchers comprise chief, main, major, primary, principal (Liu, 2010a); awesome, excellent, fabulous, fantastic, great, terrific, wonderful (Cai, 2012); interesting, nice (Tran, 2013); nice, kind, lovely, friendly, gorgeous, pleasant (Hoffman, 2014); appalling, horrific, horrible, hideous (Sirikan, 2014); deadly, lethal, fatal (Supachai, 2015); quick, fast

(Aroonmanakun, 2015); initial/preliminary, following/subsequent, and sufficient/adequate (Hu, 2015); appropriate, proper, suitable (Petcharat & Phoocharoensil, 2017); general, common, typical (Faemthaisong, 2021); whole, entire, total (Imsa-ard & Phoocharoensil, 2022); little, small (Aroonmanakun & Aroonmanakun, 2023); blank, empty, vacant (Lertcharoenwanich, 2023); normal, regular, common, ordinary, usual (Sangseekaew, 2023); perfect, flawless, impeccable (Kongcharoen & Thummanuruk, 2023); important, significant, crucial (Chaokongjakra, 2023); small, little, tiny, petite (Ammari & Al-Ahmad, 2023); and calm, peaceful, silent, quiet (Kongcharoen & Chinsethagij, 2025.)

3. Discussion

From the literature review, researchers started to focus on exploring synonyms since 1996 (Hanks, 1996); however, research on synonyms started to be popular after 2010. From the previous research, researchers were interested in exploring many synonyms in different parts of speeches, including verbs, nouns, and adjectives. The synonyms that researchers explored in early years are verbs and nouns (Hanks, 1996; Sandström, 2005); however, starts from 2010, the research has shifted the focus to adjectives (Cai, 2012; Faemthaisong, 2021; Hoffman, 2014; Kongcharoen & Thummanuruk, 2023; Lertcharoenwanich, 2023; Mäkelä, 2020; Ammari & Al-Ahmad, 2023; Sangseekaew, 2023; Sirikan, 2014; Supachai, 2015). Verbs and nouns are still explored, even though they were not as popular as adjectives. This trend yields the shift in the need to use a noun modifier in different contexts. This is probably because the trend of the noun phrase (NP) as an indicator of a more formal writing style, which is different from spoken discourse, where clauses are more prominent (Biber et al, 2011). This indicates that researchers in recent years tend to focus on exploring the words in the written register rather than the spoken register.

From the literature review, synonyms can be classified by many approaches to provide more insightful information to explain to students the usage of each synonym. All findings in this paper suggest that each synonym cannot be

substituted in all contexts. They carry some differences to signify the different usage of each synonym. The features in the methodology section and approaches that have been used popularly among researchers are corpus-based analysis, such as degree of formality, collocations, and colligation, or grammatical patterns.

3.1 Degree of formality

Many researchers used genres classified in the corpus as the basis for classifying the formality. From COCA, the Academic genre is classified as formal, while Spoken and TV/Movies are defined as informal. Magazines, Fiction, Blogs, Webs, and News are between formal and informal (Davies, 2008). From this classification, the normalized frequency per 1 million words is used to identify the formality of each word in the set of synonyms. The results from this method might yield some differences; however, this is not always the case. Kongcharoen and Thummanuruk (2023) found that from the set of synonymous adjectives – perfect, flawless, impeccable- the degree of formality rarely yields differences between formality and informality. The normalized frequency (per 1 million words) may not always classify differences in terms of formality among synonyms. Words that possess the highest frequency in the corpus always receive the highest normalization. In this case, the degree of formality may not be a reliable method to classify the synonyms.

3.2 Collocations

Collocations have received much attention from researchers to classify the synonyms. Frequently, researchers use ready-to-use tools equipped on the website from large corpora to produce statistical results for collocations. In order to test the strength of the collocation, the Mutual Information Score (MI Score) is the most popular method used in the synonyms research. MI Score relies on "a ratio between the observed frequency of the given collocation and its expected frequency calculated for a random co-occurrence of the words" (Szudarski, 2023, P. 28). The MI Score equal to 3 or above is used as a benchmark to signify the strong association between the collocation (Imsa-ard & Phoocharoensil, 2022).

Besides the MI Score, the frequency of occurrence of each collocate is also taken into account. COCA normally ranks the collocation based on the highest frequency and the highest MI score. The benchmark of the 30 most frequent collocates is employed in much synonym research. This method can yield a rough difference of the collocations used with each word in the synonyms.

3.3 Semantic Preference and Semantic Prosody

After extracting the collocations, noun collocations are normally grouped based on the semantic themes. The features used for this analysis are called semantic preference. Semantic preference and semantic prosody are closely related. Semantic preference is related to theme classification. Since the semantic preference is used mostly with the noun collocations, the themes can be varied. Some noun collocates can range from a few themes to more than 10 themes. In contrast, semantic prosody is normally classified into 3 categories: neutral, positive, and negative. Therefore, semantic prosody is mostly used with adverb collocations in the synonym research. After exploring the synonym classification, semantic preference, and semantic prosody, a strong discussion of the differences between synonyms follows. Frequently, different words have different semantic preferences and prosody. Some words might prefer a more negative connotation than others, and vice versa. This method can yield significant differences in classifying synonyms.

3.4 Componential Analysis

Componential analysis relies on semantic nuance and collocations to differentiate the synonyms. Componential analysis has been implemented in synonym analysis recently (Kongcharoen & Chinsethagij, 2025). Kongcharoen and Chinsethagij (2025) have used componential analysis in their last step in differentiating the synonymous adjectives- *calm, peaceful, silent*, and *quiet*. They combined the extracted data provided by COCA to find collocations and componential analysis. First, the noun collocations and adverb collocations were grouped into themes based on their semantic similarity. Then, they categorized the

target synonymous adjectives based on the same semantic themes. The results yield some shared semantic elements and distinct semantic elements, which confirmed that the four synonymous adjectives- *calm, peaceful, silent*, and *quiet* were near-synonyms.

From the previous research, componential analysis can yield the differences of the synonyms in terms of the collocational semantic themes. This can provide insightful information on how each word in the same synonym set can convey different senses of meaning. This analysis is still new in synonym research; however, it can be another useful method to classify the near-synonyms.

3.5 Colligation or Grammatical Patterns

Another popular method for classifying synonyms is grammatical pattern. There was a belief that different word in the set of synonyms carries different grammatical patterns. From the exploration of the synonyms research, this feature yields the most significant result for synonym classification. In order to extract the grammatical pattern, concordance analysis is used for most research. Concordance lines produced by large corpora like COCA or BNC are used in this analysis. 200 concordance lines are the least number used as a benchmark to extract the grammatical patterns. In order to produce more accurate and credible results, the number of concordance lines can increase to 500. After extracting the grammatical patterns, different words normally have different grammatical patterns. This may be because words always have different colligations based on the lexico-grammatical manner, despite their similarity in meaning.

4. Conclusion

After a vigorous review of much synonym research, it is seen that dictionaries are the first source to see how synonyms are different. However, dictionaries cannot provide insightful information to provide a clear cut of each synonym. Therefore, corpus-based analysis has been an influential approach to distinguishing the synonyms. The tool that is popularly used to extract the

information for corpus-based analysis to classify the synonyms is the Corpus of Contemporary American English, or COCA. COCA consists of 2 billion words and is classified into eight genres, which are blog, web, TV/movies, spoken, fiction, magazine, newspaper, and academia. Therefore, the information from COCA can provide information on the degree of formality in each set of synonyms. Besides that, COCA also provides information on the collocation together with the calculated Mutual Information score or MI score. Apart from COCA, British National Corpus or BNC and Sketch Engine are also popular tools among researchers to extract data to provide information on how to differentiate the near-synonyms (Aroonmanakun & Aroonmanakun, 2023; Chung, 2011; Figes, 2013; Gu, 2017; Hanks, 1996; Pimjuntug, 2015; Phitayakorn, 2016; Sandström, 2005; Séguin, 2020; Shahzadi, et al., 2019; Song, 2021; Srithanyarat, 2016; Supachai, 2015; Supanfai, 2022; Uba & Irudayasany, 2023; Urunbaevna, 2022; Walker, 2011; Yang, 2016).

It has been proven that many features using corpus-based analysis have been useful for differentiating synonymous words. When looking at synonymous words, the degree of formality is always the first criterion to differentiate them. Frequently, synonymous words are used differently in terms of formality, which means one word is always used more formally than the other words regarding their contexts. However, the degree of formality may not always yield the differences. It is hard to rely on formality alone to differentiate the synonyms.

Then collocation is another useful criterion to differentiate the synonyms. Most of the synonymous words pair with different collocates. A few synonymous words use the same collocates. This signified that most of the synonymous words cannot be completely replaced with each other. Moreover, an MI Score equivalent to 3 or above is used as a benchmark to indicate a strong association between the collocations. This feature is very useful since different words normally pair with different collocates.

Colligation or grammatical patterns yield the most significant results. However, not much research focuses on this feature. This may be because, in order to extract grammatical patterns, many steps are involved. A minimum of 200 concordance lines to analyze each word in the concordance analysis is time and energy consuming; however, it is worth exploring since the results always yield insightful information on how synonyms are different despite their shared meanings.

The corpus-based approaches are mostly used because they can provide clear information to identify the differences between synonymous words. However, some semantic analyses have been suggested recently to differentiate the synonyms, such as semantic preference, semantic prosody, and componential analysis. Semantic preference and semantic prosody are seen as other essential criteria to differentiate the near-synonyms since they associate with the collocation which was previously used. Many researchers see this analysis as another essential tool to signify the similarities and differences of the synonyms (Hu, 2015; Jarunwaraphan & Mallikamas, 2020; Kongcharoen & Chinsethagij, 2025; Lertcharoenwanich, 2023; Lertcharoenwanich & Phoocharoensil, 2022; Phoocharoensil, 2021(a); Phoocharoensil, 2021(b)).

Besides the semantic preference and semantic prosody, componential analysis has been suggested recently (Kongcharoen & Chinsethagij, 2025) to signify the different semantic components in the synonyms, since it can signify the subtle meanings in the synonyms. This can be another useful method to classify near-synonyms.

5. Implications

Although many other synonymous words have not been explored, teachers and students can use steps and stages in extracting the similarities and differences in the synonym research to roughly see the similarities or differences of other synonyms. For example, the degree of formality in COCA is one easy

method to explore if the interested synonymous words are similar or different. This can be an initial step to differentiate the synonyms, and identifying the degree of formality can be introduced to students at the beginner level. Besides the degree of formality, collocation is another good method to see the differences in the usage of synonymous words. Collocations can be extracted easily through a ready-to-use tool such as COCA. Teachers can introduce COCA and implement corpus-driven or data-driven into a language classroom.

On the contrary, semantic preference and semantic prosody might be too difficult and too complicated for students at the beginner level to extract the information from COCA, since this may require more study in semantics to be able to identify the semantic preference and semantic prosody. This method can be implemented for a higher level of students, such as advanced level or English major students. Colligation or grammatical patterns are also too difficult for students at a beginner level; however, concordance lines can be introduced to students to see how corpus-based analysis can be utilized to extract some information regarding collocations and colligation or grammatical patterns. In this regard, corpus-based instruction can be helpful in the classroom.

An activity such as choosing the correct alternative can be interesting. The following example, "How did your past experiences *affect* or *influence* the way you coped with changes?" (Lee & Liu, 2009), can be used as an exercise to see if students can choose the correct word that fits into a certain context. This kind of activity can be created and enhance students' ability to select correct synonymous words. The words chosen can be based on the degree of formality, collocations, or colligation, and grammatical patterns. This way, students can get familiar with the synonymous words more frequently and can retain their vocabulary choices in the right context.

In a higher level of class, such as English major students or graduate students, mini corpus research can be implemented in this classroom. After

explaining the steps of synonym exploration, students can try to enhance their research skills by implementing these methods in their mini corpus research. This activity can help build up research skills, especially in analyzing, interpreting results, and providing discussions.

Besides pedagogical implications, research implications can be added. From the previous research, there are numerous studies focused on how to differentiate synonyms; very few studies focused on the implications of the synonyms in a real classroom. This type of research is still understudied. This can be a gap in exploring near-synonyms. Moreover, implementing componential analysis is also understudied. More research can be conducted to prove whether the componential analysis can be useful in synonym research.

6. About the Author

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8. Appendix

Author(s)	Year	Synonyms	Part of Speech	Tools	Features Extracted

Hanks	1996	Abandon/ incite/ bother/ urge	Verb	BNC	Collocations, semantic similarities
Sandström	2005	Opportunity/ possibility/ chance	Noun	Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, Oxford English Dictionary, Webster's Online Dictionary, Oxford Reference Online, BNC	Semantic and syntactic aspects
Lee & Liu	2009	Affect/ influence	Verb	Merriam-Webster Dictionary, VIEW	Collocations
Liu	2010 (a)	Chief/main/ major/primary/ principal	Adjective	COCA	A corpus-based behavioral profile (BP) approach, noun collocation, semantic and usage
Phoochar- oensil	2010	Ask/beg/plead/ request/appeal	Verb		lexical, syntactic, and stylistic information
Walker	2011	Head/ run/ manage	Verb	BNC, Bank of English (BoE)	Collocations, semantic prosody
Chung	2011	Create/produce	Verb	Brown Corpus, the Frown	Sense of meaning, collocations

				Corpus, British National Corpus, Sketch Engine	
Cai	2012	Awesome/ excellent/ fabulous/ fantastic/great/ terrific/ wonderful	Adjective	COCA	Real usage, noun collocation
Liu & Espino	2012	Actually/ genuinely/ really/truly	Adverb	COCA	Formality, collocations, sentential position
Liu	2013	1. Incorrectly/ wrongly	Adverb	COCA	Collocations
		2. Important/ significant	Adjective		
		3. Demand/ request/ require	Verb		
		4. Doubt/ suspect	Verb		
Tran	2013	Interesting/nice	Adjective	The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE), Google Books, and a mini-corpus consisting	grammatical and functional patterns

					of over 50 conversations
Figes	2013	Want/fancy/ wish	Verb	BNC, Longman Language Activator Thesaurus online	Meanings, grammatical patterns, genre
Hoffman	2014	Nice/kind/ lovely/friendly/ gorgeous/ pleasant	Adjective	The Macmillan Dictionary, The Collins American Dictionary, The Marriam Webster Dictionary, COCA	Degree of formality, semantic and usage
Ruenroeng	2014	Ruin/ demolish/ destroy	Verb	COCA	Degrees of formality, collocation, grammatical patterns, and their distribution in different genres
Aroonma- nakun	2015	Quick/fast	Adjective	the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)	Collocation
Hu	2015	Initial/ preliminary, following/ subsequent, sufficient/ adequate	Adjective	Collin Thesaurus, Merriam- Webster Online Dictionaries	Semantic prosody
Chalerm- sook	2015	Increase/raise	Verb	COCA, Longman Dictionary	Definition, grammar patterns, collocations,

					degree of formality
Sirikan	2014	Appalling/ horrific/horrible /hideous	Adjective	Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, Oxford Collocation Dictionary, BNC, COCA	Grammatical pattern, collocation
Supachai	2015	Deadly/lethal/ fatal	Adjective	Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, BNC	Degree of formality, collocations, Grammatical pattern
Yang	2016	Learn/acquire	Verb	BNC, Sketch Engine	Usage, collocation
Pimjuntug	2015	Respond/reply/ answer	Verb	Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, BNC, COCA	Degree of formality, grammar patterns, collocations
Srithanya-rat	2016	To be sorry/apologize	Verb	BNC, COCA, Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus	Meaning, style or degree of formality, grammatical patterns, collocations and pragmatics
Phitaya-korn	2016	Advise/ recommend/ suggest	Verb	BNC	Collocations, grammatical pattern
Musikarn	2016	Subject/expose	Verb	Longman Dictionary of	Grammatical patterns,

				Contemporary English, Oxford Learner's Dictionary Online, AntConc software	collocations, usage in Engineering reports
Panyapa-yatjati	2016	Grieve/mourn/ regret	Verb	Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English online (LDOCE), COCA	Referential meaning, grammatical patterns, and noun collocations.
Petcharat & Phoocha-roensil	2017	Appropriate/ proper/ /suitable	Adjective	Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English 6th edition (2014), Longman Advanced American Dictionary 3rd edition (2013), Macmillan Collocations Dictionary (2010), COCA	Meanings, degrees of formality, collocations, and grammatical patterns
Gu	2017	Obtain/gain	Verb	Sketch Engine, BNC Web, and Just the Word	collocations
Jiranan-thiporn	2018	Problem/ trouble	Noun/Verb	COCA	Degree of formality
Bonkra-thok	2018	Convey/ express	Verb	COCA	Degree of formality, collocations,

					grammatical pattern
Wongrat	2019	Predict/ forecast	Verb	COCA, Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE), Merriam-Webster Dictionary	collocations
Shahzadi, Asghar, & Javed	2019	Arrive/ reach	verb	BNC, Sketch Engine, Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English	Collocations, colligation patterns, word sketches and sketch differences
Phoocha-roensil	2020	Consequence/ result/outcome	Noun	the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)	Formality, collocation
Jarunwa-raphan & Mallika-mas	2020	Chance/ opportunity	Noun	the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), online dictionaries	Genres in COCA, Collocation, Semantic perspective
Mäkelä	2020	Near/ close		COCA	Collocations
Séguin	2020	Explain/clarify	Verb	BNC	Usage patterns, significant exceptions, semantic prosody
Phoocha-roensil &	2021	Increase/rise	Verb	Corpus of Contemporary	Genre, collocation

				American English (COCA)	
Kanok-permpoon Phoocha-roensil	2021 (b)	Predict/foresee	Verb	the Corpus of Contemporary American English or COCA	genres, collocations, colligations, and semantic prosody
Phoocha-roensil	2021 (a)	Persist/persevere	Verb	Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 6th Edition (LDOCE), COCA	Distribution across genres, collocations, semantic prosody
Imsa-ard	2021	Concentrate/ emphasize/ focus	Verb	Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, Merriam-Webster Dictionary, Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, COCA	Collocations, sense of meaning, grammatical patterns
Faemthai-song	2021	General/ common/ typical	Adjective	Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, COCA	Meanings, degree of formality, collocations, grammatical pattern
Song	2021	Damage/ destroy	Verb	BNC, Sketch engine	Frequencies, genre distribution,

					colligation, collocation
Xi	2021	Declare/ announce	Verb	COCA	Collocations and semantic prosody
Lertcha-roenwa-nich & Phoocha-roensil	2022	Purpose/goal/ objective	Noun	the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)	Genres, degree of formality, collocation, semantic preference
Kruawong & Phoocha-roensil	2022	Teach/educate /instruct	Verb	the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)	Genre, collocation
Imsa-ard, Phoocha-roensil	2022	Whole/entire/ total	Adjective	Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (online version), Merriam-Webster's Learner's Dictionary (online version), Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2014), COCA	collocations and strict sense of meaning
Supanfai	2022	People/ persons	Noun	Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, BNC	Collocations, semantic preferences

Urunbaev-na	2022	Should/ have to	Verb	BNC	collexemes
Aroonma-nakun & Aroonma-nakun	2023	Little/small	Adjective	Monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, BNC, Thai National Corpus, English-Thai parallel corpus	Thai translation
Lertcharo enwanich	2023	Blank/empty/ vacant	Adjective	COCA	Degree of formality, noun collocates, semantic preference
Chaengch enkit	2023	Cease/halt/ stop		COCA	Degree of formality, collocations, theme
Sangsee-kaew	2023	Normal/regular /common/ ordinary/usual	Adjective	Longman's Advance American Dictionary 3rd edition, Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionaries 10th edition, COCA	Meanings, degree of formality, collocations, grammatical patterns
Uba & Irudaya-sany	2023	Increase/ rise	Verb	BNC, Sketch Engine	Frequency, collocations, syntactic behavioral profile
Kongcha-roen,	2023	Perfect/ flawless/ impeccable	Adjective	Oxford Learners' Dictionary, Macmillan	Degree of formality, collocations,

Thumma-nuruk				Dictionary, Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, COCA	grammatical patterns
Chao-kongjakra	2023	Important/ significant/ crucial	Adjective	COCA	Degree of formality, Semantic preference
Muang-meeka & Kanok-permpoon	2023	Join/ attend/ participate	Verb	Oxford Advanced American Dictionary, COCA	Degree of formality, collocations, grammatical patterns, semantic preferences
Ammari & Al- Ahmad	2023	Small/ little/ tiny/ petite	Adjective	COCA, Open Cambridge Learner English Corpus (CLC)	Genre, comparison, collocations, grammatical patterns
Ivanova & Medve-deva	2023	Destroy/ ruin/ break/ obliterate/ raze/ annihilate/ crush/ devastate/ wreck	Verb	COCA, Merriam-Webster Dictionary	Collocations
Kongcha-roen & Chinse-thagij	2025	Calm/ peaceful/ silent/ quiet	Adjective	Oxford Learners Dictionary, Macmillan Dictionary,	Degree of formality, collocations, semantic

| Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, COCA | preference, semantic prosody, componential analysis |