A Corpus-Based Approach Towards Investigating the Collocations of The Synonymous Nouns Problem, Difficulty and Trouble

Sawsan Hazim Hassan
Faculty of Arts
University of Baghdad
sawsan@coart.uobaghdad.edu.iq

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Abstract

This paper investigates the concordances of synonymous nouns (*problem*, *difficulty* and *trouble*) to discover their collocational behaviour in the British National Corpus (BNC) based on identifying their syntactic and semantic patterns. Considering the collocates of such semantically related nouns can be a plausible and significant way for EFL learners as collocations can show how two words or more are frequently used in a text. Learning how collocations are formed is a complicated process for learners as they lack the knowledge to understand how collocations are formed. The current study therefore considers the linguistic features used to form collocations, without relying intensively on the arbitrary use of collocate. This indicates that learners still need an explanation to understand how a set of combinations are formed based on studying their linguistic features such as semantic usage, phraseological combinations and semantic prosody, without relying too much on dictionaries as they only provide the word meanings with examples that do not explain the different uses and meanings of their synonyms. The data results display how some collocations are not formed arbitrarily; they are associated with fixed word combinations that contribute to explaining the collocational behaviour of collocates. The study shows that linguistic features are required to ease the process of learning collocations. These include the grammatical and semantic characteristics of each collocate to establish the accurate use of collocations.

Keywords: collocation, synonymy, corpus, concordance, arbitrary.

Introduction:

Studying collocations has established considerable attention in teaching English as a foreign language. Exploring the difference between synonymous words is of great value for English language learners, thus collocation is essential for this purpose. Moreover, the corpus-based approach is one of the advantages used in corpus studies as it shows all the contexts wherein a search word occurs. This would make it possible to identify different meanings and linguistic patterns associated with the words under study through the contexts (Biber, Conrad & Reppen, 1998). Investigating collocations in general and synonyms in particular will be beneficial for English language learners to explore which collocates are frequently/infrequently used and how they are used within a data set. Therefore, this research is carried out by applying a corpus-based approach to explore the concepts of collocations and semantic prosody of the synonyms *problem*, *difficulty*, and *trouble* using the corpus data British National Corpus (BNC) and the online software tool Sketch Engine (SkE).

A number of studies have considered the concepts of collocation and semantic prosody of synonyms in studying English as a foreign language. However, a few studies have considered the linguistic features and processes of synonyms. Walker (2011) examined the collocational behaviour of a group of synonymous verbs and nouns selected from the area of business English. In this study, the researcher tried to show that collocations can be identified by examining some linguistic features and processes such as the semantics of individual items, the use of semantic prosody that influence the formation of collocations. The study shows that not all collocations are arbitrary phenomena; several linguistic features and processes can influence the way collocations are formed.

Examining the linguistic features of synonyms can help observe how collocates are formed and also consider their evaluative meaning based on their association in the contexts. The corpus-based approach is then applied to explore the differences and similarities of these synonyms in terms of collocation and semantic prosody. The purpose is to help learners of English understand and distinguish between synonyms.

2. Corpus techniques

I have made use of concordance and collocate in the analysis of this paper. The main goal is to explore the concordances of the selected lexical nouns in terms of collocations and semantic prosody. The next

sections present a detailed account of each corpus technique.

2.1 Collocation

Collocation is the co-occurrence of two or more words together. According to Firth (1957, p. 11), who first proposed the word, "[y]ou shall know a word by the company it keeps". According to Stubbs, collocation has "a lexical relation between two or more words which tend to co-occur within a few words of each other in running texts" (2001, p. 24). This definition is known as 'textual' because it is based on the occurrence of an item in a given text (Partington, 1998, p. 15). The concept of collocation has also been defined according to the lexical and frequent or statistical occurrences of the node word. This is mainly used in corpus studies to examine a large amount of data to identify collocates considering various statistical measurements (p. 16).

Exploring the collocational behaviour and semantic prosody of near-synonyms, Xiao and McEnery (2006) undertook a contrastive study from data collected from English and standard Chinese languages. They found that semantic prosody and semantic preference are observable in both languages. The findings show the importance of teaching collocates of near-synonyms for language learners. Further, collocation patterns and semantic prosodies can be different across text categories. This can be useful for teaching language for specific purposes. Collocation, therefore, "provides a deeper understanding of the meaning and use of a word" (Bennett, 2010, p. 9). Investigating collocation will ease distinguishing the use of synonyms in the context and make the process of learning less complicated, rather, notable. It is valuable then to compare the collocational behaviour of a particular item with that of a synonym to establish its collocational behaviour (Walker, 2011, p, 296). The concept of collocation is further extended to include semantic prosody in which the former will be considered as discussed in detail below.

2.2 Semantic prosody

Two different notions relevant to collocation are semantic prosody and semantic preference. The former, which is the focus of this research, was initially defined by Louw (1993) and was referred to as *discourse prosody* by Stubbs (2001). Prosody refers to patterns in language shown via using corpus tools as concordances and collocations (Baker, 2006). According to McEnery and Hardie (2012, p. 136), words or phrases can have a negative or positive semantic prosody if they co-occur with units that have a negative or positive meaning. To make it clear, in twenty random concordance lines taken from the BNC, the lemma *happen* occurs with subjects that can be negatively evaluated in eight cases, while it is evaluated as positive in four cases, with the other eight cases evaluated neutrally or ambiguous. To understand the relationship between the node and its collocate, it is possible to achieve the process of evaluative prosody through collocation (Partington, 2014). Semantic prosody has been used in a wider range of meanings to describe the prosody of the lexical items as being, for example, bad/good, unfavourable/favourable or unpleasant/pleasant. However, this abundant sense of meaning, as Walker (2011) argued, might reflect the complicated nature of the meaning of a lexical item. Therefore, the analysis of the current study will be limited to the original notions used by Louw, as being either positive or negative, based on the association of a lexical item with its collocates in the context displaying un/desirable events.

As there is a connection to semantic preference, Partington (2004) states that these phenomena are different in which semantic prosody is a sub-category of semantic preference. That is to say, it is "reserved for instances where an item shows a preference to co-occur with items that can be described as bad, unfavourable or unpleasant, or as good, favourable or pleasant" (p. 149). In brief, Partington argues that the two notions interact; i.e. semantic preference "contributes powerfully to building, while semantic prosody" dictates the general environment which constrains the preferential choices of the node item (2004, p. 151).

3. Data and method

This section illustrates the procedure for collecting the data and the method applied in the analysis. The corpus used in this study is the British National Corpus (BNC) stored in the online software tool *Sketch Engine* (SkE) (Kilgarriff et al. 2004). The BNC, a100-million words general corpus, consists of a collection of written texts such as newspapers, periodicals and journals, published and unpublished letters, academic books and university essays. I used BNC, being representative of British English, to identify collocates of the synonyms under study to observe how semantically lexical words are represented in the BNC, as it is designed to derive significant collocates based on their grammatical relations among collocates. Using Sketch Engine to explore the collocational behaviour of lexical items has gained special attention in previous studies. Pearce (2008), for example, created word sketches for the lemmas MAN and WOMAN and found that MAN tends to occur as the subject of verbs that referenced violence, for example, 'murder', 'kidnap' and 'abuse', while as an object, it is positioned in a criminal context, such as 'accuse', 'charge and 'arrest'. Sketch Engine can therefore be used as a functional tool to gain information about a specific word at a lexico-grammar level.

In this current study, three nominal synonyms, namely, *problem*, *difficulty* and *trouble* were selected, referred to as also searching items, due to their close

synonyms to compare their collocational behaviour. Their close meanings might cause trouble when using them correctly. The analysis is based on identifying patterns surrounding the selected words. Searching through the BNC in Sketch Engine will help display frequencies, concordances, and patterns of the words under study. Linguistic patterns, according to Baker & McEnery (2005, p. 198), can help to 'illuminate the existence of discourses that may otherwise be unobserved'. Likewise, McEnery and Gabrielatos note that 'the observed patterns in the corpus data are used […] to derive insights about language' (2006, p. 36). According to Hunston (2002, p. 109), patterns of association 'can convey messages implicitly and even be at odds with an overt statement'. Given that, significant patterns can be categorised into grammatical and lexical ones to show the co-occurrence of lexical items in a text. Following scholars like Kennedy (2003) and Walker (2011), not all collocates are identified arbitrarily, collocates can be identified according to certain linguistic features and processes such as grammatical and semantic characteristics. In this study, the same method will be adopted to conduct a linguistic analysis of the collocation and semantic prosody of synonymous nouns.

As collocates are grammatically tagged in the sketch engine, the analysis will be focused on the co-occurrence of lexical items "identified in the concordance as strong collocational patterns"(Tognini-Bonelli 2001, p. 101). Table (1) below shows the three items selected from the BNC for the current study alongside their frequency.

Table 1: Frequency of target words

Lexical items	Frequency
Problem	55.546
Difficulty	12.992
Trouble	9.519

The word *problem* is highly used in the BNC, followed by *difficulty* and then *trouble*. This demonstrates that *problem* tends to occur in different contexts as will be established later in the analysis. Having extracted the frequency of the selected words, the collocates are considered to carry out the analysis. The semantically related collocates are categorised into a set of groups based on expanding the concordances, which provide information that helps observe linguistic patterns. The observed patterns are then characterised into grammatical and semantic patterns to show a detailed account of the features of the words in the text.

The corpus software SkE generates different tools, among which is word sketch. It is the focal function of SkE due to its distinct features in providing significant collocates in a number of grammatical relations among words within the corpus. Word sketch is defined as a one-page automatic, corpus-based summary of the grammatical and collocational behaviour of a word, accompanied by its frequency lists and statistical measures (Kilgarriff et al., 2004). This will enable the user to see the contexts where the node word and its collocate co-occur. The first stage of analysis consists of creating a word sketch for each lexical item. Figure 1 below shows a sample screenshot for the node word *problem*.

Figure 1: A sample screenshot of the problem

According to the data stored in Sketch Engine, the word *problem* tends to occur in different grammatical relations such as the object and subject of verbs. The grammatical relation of verbs, for example, shows the relations between a verb and the search items as objects and subjects. It modifies words and is also modified by a set of adjectives. Finally, it tends to co-occur with such terms as *issue*, *difficulty*, *health*, *question* in the patterns *problems and issues*, *problems or questions*, etc. However, I focused on the grammatical relations of modifiers and verbs as they make up the largest frequency of all the three synonymous items.

The grammatical patterns of *problem*, *difficulty* and *trouble* tagged as modifiers, and verbs were derived and examined further to reveal how these nouns are represented in the BNC. By comparing the collocational behaviour of the selected items, it would be possible to establish whether there are differences or similarities (or both) when exploring the thematic categories of the collocational patterns and their prosodies. For further information about

collocational patterns in relation to evaluative prosodies, see Hassan (2019).

4. Data analysis

The main aim of this section is to analyse the data based on the corpus technique of collocations and the relevant concept of semantic prosody. The focus is, therefore, to identify the differences as well as similarities of the significant collocates among the three lexical items in the BNC. Using the corpus linguistics approach has been efficiently exploited to obtain more textual evidence and so identify patterns. Before examining the collocational behaviour and semantic prosody of the selected lexical items, it is worth mentioning their definitions to illustrate the exact meaning of each noun. According to Cambridge Dictionary Thesaurus (Online, 2021), the three lexical items are defined as follows:

- A **problem** is used very broadly to refer to someone or something that makes things hard for others and needs to be fixed or attended to.
- The noun **difficulty** is a common alternative to **problem**. It is used in more official contexts to describe a problem that is not easily fixed.
- You can describe several problems as **trouble**.

Based on these well-described definitions, the meanings of these search words are identical sharing the same core which can be used synonymously. However, they are used differently based on the context that will establish the meaning; the noun *problem* needs attention to be solved or fixed, but it is not the case with *difficulty*. It is necessary at this level to consider the quantitative results of the lexical words to determine their significance. As mentioned before, creating a word sketch for each lexical item will be the first step. This stage is followed by identifying the linguistic patterns of these lexical items. Appendices A, B and C show the word sketch of the three synonyms problem, difficulty and trouble based on the grammatical relations of modifiers, objects and subjects alongside their raw frequency and saliency. The three grammatical patterns of the collocates will be investigated in detail next. The analysis is split into sub-sections, which is convenient for comparison and discussion.

4.1 Modifiers of problem, difficulty and trouble

This section is concerned with exploring the information gained from the sketches of the three selected words tagged as nouns used with modifiers. The findings shown in Appendix A are overlapping as some modifiers are shared among the three nouns. This is called shared collocates defined by Walker (2011) as "collocates which are frequently associated with all the selected items in the group" (p. 298), for example, serious, financial, particular, main, severe, and so on. However, there are characteristic collocates which are "associated with one item in the group". For example, the adjective environmental, associated with the nature domain, collocates only with the noun problem, showing a substantial element that needs to be dealt with seriously. Examining the contexts of the highly used modifiers serious and major underlines also the occurrence of the word problem in the collocational pattern of environmental problem, shown next. This suggests that environmental issue has been a concern as it affects human lives with industrial development. This will be explored in detail next.

As the word sketch displays frequent and salient collocates, the best way to distinguish between them is through analysing the concordance to uncover patterns of occurrence associated with them. This process would demonstrate how each noun is used in the context and suggest the topic for further discussion. The adjective collocates are further examined and grouped into categories for the purpose of comparison shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2:Categories of modifier collocates of problem, difficulty and trouble

Category	problem	difficulty	trouble
Evaluative	Serious, major, difficult, real, severe, main, basic, different, common	Considerable, severe, real, serious, obvious, particular, potential, emotional, apparent	Serious, major, difficult, real, severe, main, different, potential, great, terrible
Socio-Economy	Financial, economic, technical, money, debt, payment, management	Financial, economic, marital, payment, behavioural, operational, administrative	Financial, economic, money, debt, payment, management
Quantity	Many, more, few, further, enormous	Enormous, much, little, many, more, slight, less, numerous	Much, little, more, further, enormous, slight, less, numerous
Health	Mental, health, medical, psychological, drug, weight	Psychological, breathing, physical	Stomach
Nature	Environmental, traffic, pollution	None	None
Education	None	Speech, learning, language, reading, linguistic, theoretical, methodological	None

The above introductory categorisation relies on investigating the concordance to identify the exact use of the word, hence, find out how lexical items differ from each other. This is rewarding as it provides an overview of the information retrieved from the contexts. As shown above, some of these

categories are shared, with only one category, education, occurring predominantly with difficulty but not with the other two synonyms. This indicates that individuals are getting difficulties in their education that does not require a solution; rather, more work is required to complete the task or to overcome it. The evaluative category is the predominant one among the three lexical items followed by the socio-economic one. This shows that a group of synonyms or near-synonyms has similar denotative meanings, but they may differ in their collocational or prosodic behaviour (see Partington, 1998), implying they are incapable of replacing each other. One basic pattern that emerged from inspecting the modifiers is the attributive and predicative use of the evaluative category.

Further investigation is also required for the purpose of comparison. Starting with the noun problem, most collocates denote evaluative adjectives: serious, major, difficult, great, significant, severe, complex, bad, among others. The data shows that these nouns are used attributively rather than predicatively as seen in figure 2 below. The adjectives serious and major are significantly the strongest collocates with 9.2 and 9.0 respectively in terms of saliency, with the adjective major being highly used in terms of frequency (711 occurrences), indicating an important and considerable situation. Looking at the concordance lines of serious below displays a set of items connected to social, economic and nature domains, such as environmental, harvesting, financial, inflationary, liquidity, ozone, etc. as shown in Figure 2 below. Similarly, the modifier major tends to co-occur with items connected to economic, social, nature and health factors including environmental, development, business, public-health, tactical, pollution, drug, fertility, medical, and so on. This confirms the typical use of this selected noun in describing the situations in these sectors.

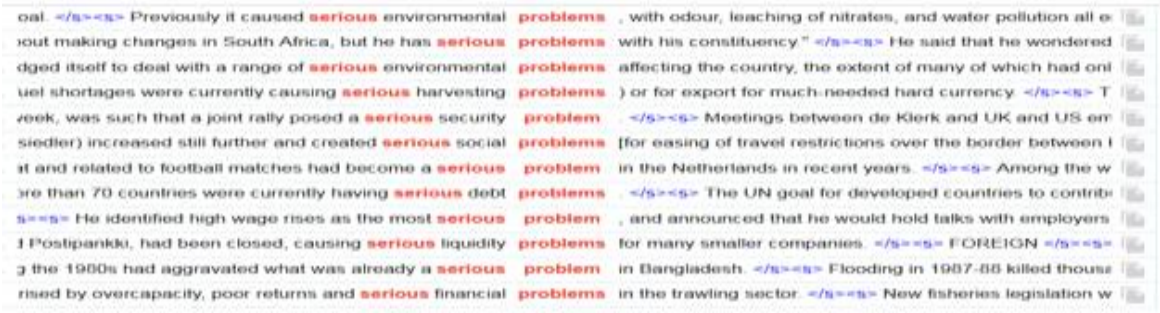

Figure 2: A sample from the concordance lines for serious problem

One of the recurrent patterns is the adjective real (461 and 8.5) pre-modified by the definite article the (185 cases, 40%) highlighting the existence of problems in various spheres that are problematic. This pattern occurs with low frequency when compared to the significant collocations serious problem and major problem. Similarly, the same adjective real is collocating with difficulty (86) and trouble (56), but less often found (29% and 14% respectively).

Moving to the noun difficulty, it is significantly opened by the modifier financial in terms of saliency 259, which occurs only in attributive positions. This is followed by words such as practical, learning, severe and considerable. These adjectives are concerned with political, educational and social issues. It less significantly collocates with the other items problem (7.6) and trouble (6.7) indicating that something is hard to deal with. When ranked in terms of raw frequency, the dominant adjective is great 427. Looking at concordance lines of great shows a co-occurrence of difficulty in contexts relating to socio-political and economic domains, as in I have pretty **great difficulty** in paying my monthly charges, we had **great difficulty** getting information on the atomic energy privatisation measure and one of the **great difficulties** faced by the South African Government and people at the moment is the need to see growth in their economy. It is predominantly preceded by the verb to have suggesting a state of possession with consistent situations. Furthermore, concordance lines for the pattern of financial difficulty show other words collocating with financial referring to a lot of stress that escalates the existing situations; such as severe, serious, insurmountable, considerable, aggravating, distress and so on.

The last synonym trouble is also examined which occurs 2,132 times with a normalised frequency of 18.98 per million. The category derived from examining this word is an overview of the lexical word trouble in the data. The item is highly modified in terms of frequency and salience by much (203 and 8.5 respectively), entailing that trouble is used as an uncountable noun referring to a typical form of quantity. A look at the concordances for much immediately suggests that the most frequent collocates are too and so indicating that the situations are more complicated as shown in figure 3 beneath:

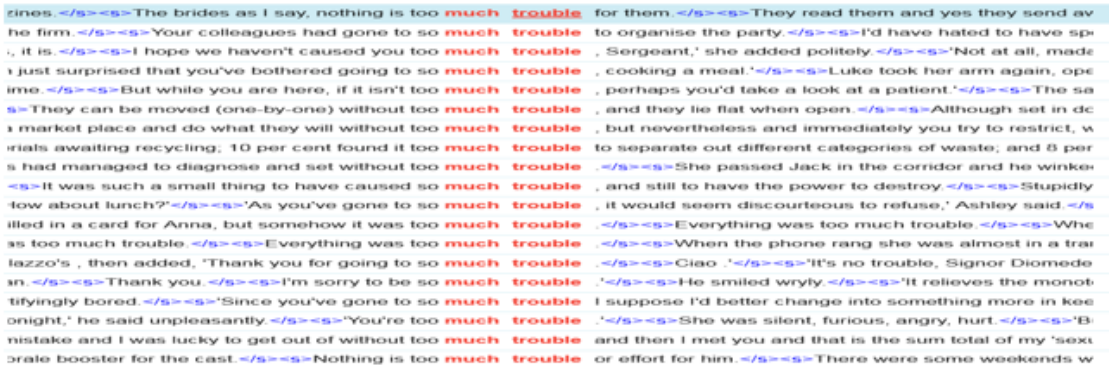

Figure 3: A sample from the concordance lines for too/so much trouble

Moreover, taking another dominant modifier, i.e. *serious*, shows a frequent pattern *of serious trouble*, suggesting the existence of a power action relating to economic and political domains: the less powerful one is always in trouble. This pattern shows cases where things are getting too hard to deal with. Another prevailing collocation in terms of saliency is *crowd trouble* (8.5) signifying the bad behaviour of fans watching a football game. The pattern in + real is prevalently observed in the collocational bundle *in real trouble* 21 cases (38%), conveying a situation that needs to be considered seriously. Considering the concordance lines of the pattern *in real trouble* carefully displays the emergence of the pronouns, e.g. *they*, *we*, *I*, *he*, *she*, proper nouns *White* and *Fuchs* and common nouns *girl* and *workstation makers*. This indicates that being in real trouble is commonly connected to human beings, suggesting special care not to be taken lightly; but seriously.

4.2 Problem, difficulty and trouble as objects

The data obtained from the word sketch shows that the selected nouns tend to occur repeatedly as the objects of verbs that try to deal with the problem route. One of the significant linguistic features that affect the formation of the selected items as objects is the semantics of the verb collocates. The verb collocates obtained from the sketch reveal a set of different word senses for the three nouns based on their meanings in the Online Macmillan Dictionary as well. Each selected item is connected to a different set of characteristic collocates. The extracted verbs collocating with the noun *problem* denote various meanings in the corpus data signifying unpleasant meanings as shown in the following table:

Table 3: Meanings of verbs collocating with problem

Topics/senses	Examples
solve a problem	solve, resolve, overcome, combat, cure, attack, correct
cause a problem	cause, create, present, produce, generate, pose
deal with a problem	tackle, handle, address, approach, discuss, treat, deal
make a problem worse	increase, exacerbate, compound, worsen, aggravate
make a problem less serious	alleviate, ease, reduce
experience a problem	experience, encounter, face, have, suffer, develop

As illustrated above, the lexical item has a number of different meanings determined by the collocates in the surrounding co-text used to show the differences between the words (Walker, 2011). According to the data (see Appendix B), there are some verbs which gain prominence such as solve collocating with problem (1504, 10.9) in terms of frequency and saliency respectively. This verb belongs mainly to the dominant category ‘solve a problem’, which occurs in the pattern of solve/solved/solves/solving (nearly 759 times). A look at the concordance lines of this dominant verb shows a co-occurrence of problem with phrases pertaining to domains, such as politics, economy, society, indicating repeatedly the existence of problems. Another prevalent verb is cause which carries an opposite meaning to solve, the former shows a positive meaning whereas the latter indicates a negative one; each one is connected to specific characteristic collocates. Therefore, there are, for example, solve the problem, cause a problem, and tackle the problem by sampling different text categories, associated with nature and health areas that produce negative and positive meanings. This phenomenon is mainly concerned with the concept of 'polysemy'; a word or phrase used with various meanings. Here in the case of the three nouns, it is the collocate itself that supports these selected items to identify different senses. Such semantic patterns can describe the meanings of these lexical items evidenced in the corpus as shown in the aforementioned table, making the process of learning collocations more supportive and adequate to discover the appropriate use of collocations in written and spoken texts.

Likewise, the noun difficulty has gained various senses; each is semantically related to a certain set of words. It is worth then reviewing these verb collocates which are composed of distinct collocates

of difficulty as an object as illustrated in Table 4 beneath.

Table 4: Meanings of verbs collocating with difficulty

Topics/senses	Examples
have difficulties	experience, encounter, face, have
overcome difficulties	overcome, resolve, avoid, solve
cause difficulties	cause, create, pose, present
make difficulties worse	compound, exacerbate, increase
predict or fail to predict difficulties	foresee, acknowledge, recognise, anticipate, underestimate

These semantic meanings show a collocational relation between a node and its collocates. The classification can be convenient to help learners how to express a certain phrase properly using the accurate collocate. According to the corpus data, the verbs *experience* and *learn* appear to be the most prominent in terms of statistics (9.8 each), whereas it is the verb *to have* that makes up the high frequency of 1,658. It seems then that the category of having difficulties shows dominance over the other meanings, implying that the lexical item *difficulty* is peculiar to describe difficult situations.

It is important to point out that some collocational pairs do not belong to any of the categories above, such as *learn difficulty*. Examining the context further displays a recurrent pattern *of learning difficulties* (193 occurrences), showing how individuals experience difficulties in all aspects of learning. However, the analysis of the concordance reveals an incorrect categorisation of the grammatical relation of this collocation in which the word *difficulty* is sorted as the object of *learn* while it is a noun phrase. Therefore, inspecting the concordance lines of collocations is required to verify that categorisation is tagged correctly.

The concordance analysis shows the frequent co-occurrence of *experience* with words relating to educational, economic and political spheres, such as *language*, *teaching*, *economic*, *political*, *financial*, etc. It is evident to see how this verb is used to stress and evaluate various difficulties received by different sectors, in contrast to *problem* in which the verb *solve* appears in the top position to indicate the process of finding a solution to such types of systems. This indicates that the pattern *solve + problem* confirms the typical use of problem with implementing a solution, whereas the pattern *experience + difficulty* is dealing with measuring the difficulties, providing a clear picture of the context that each lexical item occurs in. Another recurrent pattern of the verb *experience* is the emergence of the word *difficulty* in its plural form (194 out of 282 occurrences). The concordance lines seem to reflect the real difficulties experienced globally as shown in Figure 4 below:


on; 3. to discover whether parents' solicitors experience difficulties in getting background history of cases from Social Servic
olicitors: Solicitors representing parents may experience difficulties in getting background history of the child in care when pr
locally-owned firms have recently experienced financial difficulties , takeovers and other production problems.</s><s>The n
ts for assistance from countries experiencing economic difficulties because of observance of the embargo].</s><s>" Noting
ned that the agency was experiencing serious financial difficulty as a result of the ever-increasing demands being made o
><s>Although not directly connected to the constitutional difficulties being experienced by Canada, McKenna acknowledged
or Comecon) continued to experience severe economic difficulties in their transition to free-market systems, concerns were
eacon failed to function and rescue teams experienced difficulties locating the wreckage.</s><s>According to some reports
numbers of state-operated companies had experienced difficulties and some had faced bankruptcy; the state budget had di
r, with 62 abstentions.</s><s>Walesa had experienced difficulty in finding someone to take on the task of forming a gover
cent times my constituency has experienced economic difficulties , so successful has my right hon. and learned Friend's tre
pport from the grant and loan, may experience financial difficulties .</s><s>That is why the Government have established th
the fact that many countries are experiencing far more difficulties than we are.</s><s>Mr. MacGregor</s><s>My hon. Frie
roviding such services?</s><s>Will he also consider the difficulties being experienced by some of my constituents in Swind
since he and his policies are uniquely responsible for the difficulties being experienced and the record repossessions and ar
re weather conditions?</s><s>Is he aware of the severe difficulties experienced in late December and early January when
as considered to be ludicrous.</s><s>Is he aware of the difficulties experienced on the part of the A26 that has not yet beer
ly's argument more credible if I had not experienced the difficulties of trying to remember, when on Tyneside to talk about Ty

Figure 4: A sample from the concordance lines for the pattern experience difficulties

The verb is *encounter* 9.2, which is almost used in the passive, is also noticeable occurring with other collocations such as *financial*, *social*, *technical*, *educational*, etc. to focus on the difficulty itself rather than the agent (s). Further investigation displays the plural form of *difficulty* (117 cases) to stress the large number of difficulties met by various sectors. Furthermore, the semantic category 'overcome difficulties' (shown in table 5 above)is also prevalent, advanced by the collocate *overcome* 9.0 in the pattern *overcome the difficulty*, which is associated with other collocates *administrative*, *financial*, *economic*, *operational*, *technical*, *practical*, *legal*, showing a clear image of the difficulties being beaten. This category appears to be equivalent in meaning to the category 'solve a problem' observed with the noun *problem*. However, the verb *solve* seems to be less prevailing with *difficulty* (25, 6.6 in terms of frequency and saliency). The verb *overcome* is also found dominant with the noun *problem* 8.9 to indicate that its main target is to solve a problem rather than experience it as it is the case with the lexica item *difficulty*.

Moving to the last selected word *trouble*, all verb collocates are also considered and classified into a set of semantic categories based on their meanings as seen in Table 5 below. The grammatical object is opened with the verb *cause* in terms of statistics 8.7, while it is the verb *have* in terms of raw frequency 875.

Table 5: Meanings of verbs collocating with trouble

Topics/senses	Examples
cause trouble	Cause, teethe, bring, give, make, create, provoke, spell
experience trouble	experience, encounter, have, take, develop
expect trouble	mean, expect, anticipate, smell
avoid trouble	avoid, prevent, stop

According to the classification above, the semantic category 'cause trouble' tends to make up the high source of senses, giving priority to explaining what makes bad things happen. The most frequent and salient verb is *cause* (230, 8.7 respectively). Looking at the concordance lines of this verb display a set of items associated with quantity words, such as *more*, *much*, *further*, *enough*, *many*, *and less*. This pattern provides information about the contextual element of quantity, answering a question like 'how many/much?' This clearly confirms the typical use of *trouble* in the quantification pattern realised by the adjective collocate *much* illuminated above. This brings up different collocational behaviours associated with the item. Another prevailing semantic category is 'experience trouble' in which the verbs *have* and *take* occur frequently (875 and 263 respectively).In this category, some of the selected items are associated with a set of fixed phraseological items. One observed pattern is *take + the trouble* followed by an infinitive to establish a good sense of duty towards achieving better results as in *take the trouble to find out what that ability is*, *taken the trouble to prepare this report*, *take the trouble to furnish a fully articulated theory of the firm*, etc. This in turn bears a pleasant semantic prosody per se. It demonstrates different collocational behaviours at the phrase level.

The category 'avoid trouble', for example, appears to be distinctive in the sense that it is not detected with the other items (i.e. *problem* and *difficulty*). The observed pattern is *to avoid trouble* shown in Figure 5 below revealing the best way to follow to prevent any bad situations that might happen.

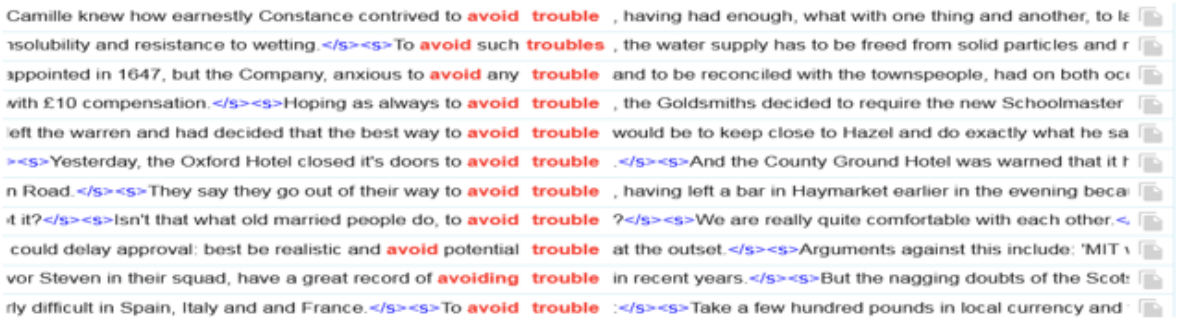
Camille knew how earnestly Constance contrived to avoid trouble , having had enough, what with one thing and another, to le
nsolubility and resistance to wetting.</s><s>To avoid such troubles , the water supply has to be freed from solid particles and r
appointed in 1647, but the Company, anxious to avoid any trouble and to be reconciled with the townspeople, had on both oc
with £10 compensation.</s><s>Hoping as always to avoid trouble , the Goldsmiths decided to require the new Schoolmaster
eft the warren and had decided that the best way to avoid trouble would be to keep close to Hazel and do exactly what he sa
><s>Yesterday, the Oxford Hotel closed it's doors to avoid trouble .</s><s>And the County Ground Hotel was warned that it h
n Road.</s><s>They say they go out of their way to avoid trouble , having left a bar in Haymarket earlier in the evening beca
t it?</s><s>Isn't that what old married people do, to avoid trouble ?</s><s>We are really quite comfortable with each other.<
could delay approval: best be realistic and avoid potential trouble at the outset.</s><s>Arguments against this include: 'MIT
vor Steven in their squad, have a great record of avoiding trouble in recent years.</s><s>But the nagging doubts of the Scot
rly difficult in Spain, Italy and and France.</s><s>To avoid trouble :</s><s>Take a few hundred pounds in local currency and

Figure 5: A sample from the concordance lines for the pattern to avoid trouble

4.3 Problem, difficulty and trouble as subjects

As for the grammatical pattern of the subject, a set of selected items are associated with fixed word combinations (phraseology). Starting with the item problem, it tends to collocate with verbs such as arise, solve, face, lie, result, encounter, and emerge suggesting a pattern of underlying problems, in which arise is highly used in terms of frequency and salience (559, 10.2 respectively). The propositions from, in and with are highly detected and the most common patterns are problem(s) arise/arose/arising from (20%), problem(s) arise/arose/arising in (10%), and problem(s) arise/arose/arising with (6%), presenting matters caused by political situations, economic factors, even people of different careers, carrying unpleasant meanings.

The other two verb collocates solve and face are found to be nearly balanced with arise in terms of salience (9.7 and 9.3 respectively). They are mostly presented in the form problem(s) solving and problem(s) facing. The former is found collocating with other common nouns, such as activities, exercise, process, technique(s), and strategies, while the latter with individuals, such as suppliers, historians, young people, children, peasant producers, students, owner-occupiers, teachers, employees, public bureaucracies, and other analogous nouns. This indicates that the collocation problem(s) facing is perceived by a series of individuals who would experience problems in various sectors.

Other collocates that refer to the meaning of the presence of the problems include exist, occur, lie, emerge and other relevant words. However, verbs to be are predominantly found in terms of frequency (5,371 occurrences), a relational process, making a clear indication of the existence of problems. Another salient verb is lie in which the phraseological units lie in (51%) and lie with (23%) are frequent combinations which are also where the former is significantly more common than the latter, showing an emphasis on the existence of problems.

Similarly, the noun difficulty is equal to problem in its verb collocates arise and face in terms of salience (9.5 and 8.1 respectively). The verb arise tends to occur in the phraseological combinations difficult(s) arise/arose/arising from (14%), difficult(s) arise/arose/arising in (14%), and difficult(s) arise/arose/arising with (6%). Similarly, the verb face occurs in the pattern difficulty(s) facing+ common

nouns relevant to various groups of people, like Americans, citizens, bishops, economist, children, chancellor, Mr Lamont, organisers, athletes, people, politician, migrants, researchers, managers, minister and others. This demonstrates that these two synonyms are noticeably associated with fixed phraseological units. It is worth noting that the verb arise is not prevailing (5.7) compared to the other nouns. Moving up, the corpus data has shown different examples with the noun trouble. It is opened with the verb start in terms of saliency (7.3).This provokes a clear caution of the beginning of troubles, declaring a state of emergency. However, verbs to be appear to make up the highest in terms of frequency (1192), making a clear perception of the nature of troubles. Other frequent and significant verbs are brew, find, begin, erupt, get, and flare. They have noticeably revealed verbs different from the other synonyms.

5. Evaluative prosody

Moving to evaluation, all lexical items under scrutiny denote negative meanings, thus, it is better to understand how these words are used and so applied in the context. Stubbs (2002, p. 225) shows that 'there are always semantic relations between node and collocates and among the collocates themselves'. Evaluation is regarded as being "dualistic, bi-dimensional sense" (Partington, 2004, p. 279) in the sense that it is "the indication of whether the speaker thinks that something (a person, thing, action, event, situation, idea, etc.) is good or bad" (Thompson, 1996, p. 65). More specifically, lexical words might have similar denotative meanings but may differ in their collocational or prosodic behaviour (Xiao and McEnery, 2006, p. 108).

As far as semantic relations exist between the lexical items and their collocates, the collocates might seem to have relatively different semantic prosody that influences the collocational behaviour of the selected words. Based on their use in the data; the results show a set of examples that denote typical meanings with different prosodic behaviour. Based on their result study, Xiao and McEnery (2006, p. 107), state that an "item does not appear to have an affective meaning until it is in the context of its typical collocates". The selected nouns *problem, difficult, and trouble* denote negative meanings, but the contexts show distinct meanings that establish the affective meanings of modifiers being, for example, either negative or positive. Instances of the former are ***serious*** *problems*, ***severe*** *difficulty*, ***terrible*** *trouble*, whereas the latter includes ***few*** *communication problems*, ***fewer*** *financial problems*, ***little*** *difficulty*, and ***slight*** *trouble*. Likewise, the bundle *nothing is too* ***much*** *trouble* indicates a pleasant way of decision under any bad circumstance. The noun *trouble* obviously does express a negative meaning, but it indicates a favourable result in the context of its collocates. Likewise, examples ***tackle*** *pollution problems*, ***resolve*** *marital difficulties*, ***encounter*** *operational difficulties*, ***overcome*** *administrative difficulties*, ***prevent*** *crowd trouble*, and ***avoid*** *trouble* express positive meanings, demonstrating that giving the precise semantic prosody of a lexical item depends mainly on its collocate in the context.

6. Concluding discussion: some implications for learning synonyms

This study has shown the collocational behaviour of three selected synonyms. It shows that some collocations can be combined arbitrarily while others need more linguistic explanations to make the process of learning collocations notable and meaningful. The linguistic required features include the grammatical pattern for each collocate, semantic prosody and semantic usage, combined with corpus techniques to demonstrate the accurate use of collocations based on their occurrence in the corpus data.

It is also important to note that these near-synonyms share similar denotational meanings though they might differ in their collocational or prosodic behaviours as in *take the trouble to furnish a fully articulated theory of the firm*. Another example is in *financial problems* bearing a bad prosody while it might alter its semantic prosody to a good one in *fewer financial problems* or *administrative difficulties* versus *overcome administrative difficulties*, indicating the importance of the contexts where they occur.

The results have also shown how observations have several implications. Semantic patterns have been of importance to classify lexical items into various meanings. This is evidenced in the set of shared collocates among the three selected nouns, revealing how semantic use is essential to help learners distinguish the different meanings collocating with the lexical items. The modifiers, for example, are examined further to display a set of nouns referring to negative attributes rather than positive ones. This is influenced by collocational behaviour associated with the items. The linguistic features will help learners avoid any misleading uses of collocates and choose those which decrease ambiguity. This indicates how these synonyms have different connotations which can be realized when understanding their linguistic features as shown above. Furthermore, the results show how certain collocates are not formed arbitrarily; they are obviously associated with fixed word combinations (phraseology) which contribute to the explanation of their collocational behaviour.

In conclusion, given the importance of studying collocation and semantic prosody to language learning, there is still a special need for examining some linguistic features of collocation in relation to their semantic prosody to investigate the correct

choice of a collocational combination based on the grammatical and semantic characteristics. There are cases where learners do not need to memorise collocations because it would be a hard task to achieve the purpose of learning collocates of synonyms arbitrarily.

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Appendix A

Adjective collocates of the nouns *problem*, *difficulty* and *trouble*

problem			difficulty			trouble		
Items	**Freq.**	**Score**	**Items**	**Freq.**	**Score**	**Items**	**Freq.**	**Score**
Serious	577	9.2	Financial	259	8.8	Much	203	8.5
Major	711	9.1	Practical	128	8.6	Crowd	27	8.5
Real	461	8.5	Learning	64	8.6	Serious	107	8.3
Particular	424	8.3	Severe	79	8.3	Hamstring	19	8.1
Main	426	8.2	Considerable	124	8.2	Engine	24	7.9
health	333	8.2	Great	427	8.0	Heart	31	7.6
Social	417	8.0	Technical	67	7.8	Enough	42	7.6
Big	349	7.9	Serious	86	7.7	Deep	54	7.5
Environmental	210	7.9	Language	51	7.5	Terrible	27	7.5
Technical	200	7.8	Economic	117	7.4	Cause	14	7.5
Economic	272	7.8	Behavioural	29	7.4	Trouble	13	7.4
Difficult	181	7.8	Marital	24	7.2	Knee	14	7.4
Practical	189	7.7	Obvious	38	7.1	Stomach	12	7.2
Financial	226	7.6	Major	114	7.1	Relegation	10	7.1
Similar	213	7.6	Much	85	7.1	Only	105	7.0
Only	280	7.6	Insuperable	19	7.0	More	169	6.8
Severe	156	7.6	Real	86	6.9	Back	23	6.8
Potential	156	7.4	Little	156	6.9	Financial	49	6.7
Fundamental	137	7.4	Inherent	20	6.9	Less	25	6.7
Specific	160	7.3	Particular	96	6.9	Money	18	6.6
Common	172	7.3	Present	53	6.9	Endless	10	6.6
Same	312	7.2	Enormous	29	6.9	Dire	7	6.5
Many	362	7.1	Extreme	25	6.8	Desperate	9	6.5
Further	170	7.1	Immense	18	6.6	Real	56	6.5
Immediate	115	7.0	Conceptual	17	6.6	Groin	6	6.4
Such	269	7.0	Payment	17	6.6	Leg	8	6.4
Behaviour	92	7.0	Similar	47	6.5	Marital	7	6.4
Mental	106	6.9	Grave	15	6.5	Spell	5	6.2
More	251	6.9	Operational	15	6.3	Eye	9	6.1
Basic	112	6.8	Methodologic	13	6.3	Big	52	6.1
Traffic	87	6.8	al	19	6.3	Immense	6	5.9
Other	477	6.8	Administrativ	27	6.3	Injury	5	5.8
Emotional	85	6.7	e	54	6.3	Bad	22	5.7
Great	236	6.7	Sexual	12	6.2	Double	10	5.7
Debt	80	6.7	Further	12	6.2	Marriage	5	5.7
Legal	110	6.7	Breathing	11	6.2	Further	31	5.6
Complex	89	6.7	Long-standing	14	6.2	Awful	6	5.6
Behavioural	75	6.7	Logistical	14	6.1	Little	59	5.6
Own	241	6.7	Reading	12	6.1	Skin	5	5.6
Pollution	72	6.6	Acute	23	6.1	Domestic	11	5.5
Political	140	6.6	Experience	10	6.1	Considerable	12	5.2
Special	118	6.5	Potential	15	6.0	Emotional	5	5.0
personal	104	6.5	Insurmountabl	15	6.0	Irish	6	5.0
psychological	70	6.5	e	14	6.0	Present	11	4.9
few	164	6.5	Genuine	10	6.0	Severe	5	4.9
considerable	84	6.4	emotional	11	5.9	Woman	5	4.8
current	91	6.4	communicatio	20	5.9	Political	20	4.6
intractable	61	6.4	n	12	5.9	Fresh	5	4.5
housing	74	6.4	relationship	14	5.8	Time	11	4.5
	69	6.4	moderate	28	5.8	Recent	11	4.4
drug	60	6.4	initial	87	5.8	Basic	7	4.3
methodologica	73	6.3	hour	19	5.8	Potential	5	4.3
l	83	6.3	temporary	46	5.8	Such	27	4.2

medical	72	6.2	current	14	5.8	great	28	4.1
	68	6.2	more	9	5.7	extra	5	4.1
central	61	6.2	additional	12	5.7	most	11	4.1
management	56	6.2	main	9	5.7	family	7	4.1
additional	54	6.2	fundamental	10	5.7	main	11	3.9
minor	57	6.2	procedural	36	5.6	whole	10	3.9
chronic	57	6.2	theoretical	22	5.6	own	19	3.5
marital	53	6.2	formidable	12	5.6	same	15	3.3
related	53	6.1	speech	15	5.6	personal	5	3.3
structural	122	6.1	special	71	5.5	particular	5	2.8
injury	58	6.1	specific	20	5.5	old	7	2.3
acute	50	6.1	slight	7	5.5	other	12	1.7
different	55	6.0	immediate	8	5.5	many	5	1.3
back	63	6.0	such	14	5.4			
drink	64	6.0	possible	9	5.4			
obvious	94	6.0	unforeseen	9	5.4			
	50	5.9	task	27	5.3			
significant	49	5.9	less	8	5.3			
present	48	5.9	linguistic	19	5.3			
second	44	5.9	psychological	7	5.3			
enormous	45	5.9	certain	7	5.3			
administrative	85	5.9	logical	15	5.3			
communicatio	49	5.9	legal	10	5.3			
n	45	5.9	ethical	8	5.3			
pressing	44	5.9	unnecessary	79	5.3			
payment	54	5.8	physical	7	5.3			
general	42	5.8	principal	6	5.3			
long-term	70	5.8	problem	6	5.2			
unemployment	51	5.8	many	22	5.2			
weight	50	5.8	added	6	5.2			
physical	71	5.8	perennial	7	5.2			
	40	5.8	utmost	26	5.2			
parking	57	5.7	personal	11	5.1			
	43	5.7	cause	11	5.1			
certain	42	5.7	unexpected	5	5.0			
sexual	52	5.6	most	8	5.0			
domestic	36	5.6	substantial	5	5.0			
important	40	5.6	internal	5	5.0			
alcohol	33	5.5	increasing	7	5.0			
bad	34	5.5	transport	5	4.9			
heart	41	5.5	mobility	8	4.9			
theoretical	37	5.5	feeding	7	4.9			
family	59	5.5	apparent	8	4.9			
philosophical	35	5.5	item	5	4.9			
urban	32	5.4	relative	5	4.8			
insoluble	38	5.4	numerous	25	4.8			
ethical	40	5.4	long-term	5	4.8			
huge			intrinsic					
money			peculiar					
whole			only					
global			comparable					
refugee								
internal								
key								

Appendix B

Verbs collocating with the nouns problem, difficulty and trouble as objects

problem			difficulty			trouble		
Items	**Freq.**	**Score**	**Items**	**Freq.**	**Score**	**Items**	**Freq.**	**Score**
solve	1504	10.9	Experience	282	9.8			
cause	939	9.6	Learn	359	9.8			
pose	539	9.4	Encounter	135	9.2			
tackle	445	9.2	Overcome	128	9.0			
present	479	8.9	Face	175	8.6	cause	230	
overcome	378	8.9	Cause	210	8.4	teethe	33	8.7
face	481	8.9	Present	135	8.3	spell	14	8.4
resolve	328	8.7	Pose	63	8.0	avoid	35	6.9
associate	313	8.4	Have	1658	7.7	have	875	6.8
have	3803	8.3	Resolve	43	7.5	take	263	6.8
create	385	8.3	Compound	33	7.4	mean	37	6.4
address	254	8.3	Associate	56	7.3	hit	17	6.2
encounter	209	8.1	Create	95	7.2	sense	8	6.0
discuss	261	8.1	Illustrate	36	7.0	expect	23	6.0
be	5.993	7.8	Find	167	6.9	flare	5	5.7
experience	182	7.8	Highlight	29	6.9	want	28	5.6
avoid	197	7.7	Involve	84	6.8	anticipate	6	5.6
identify	176	7.5	Avoid	40	6.7	smell	5	5.6
raise	205	7.5	Solve	25	6.6	forget	8	5.4
highlight	128	7.4	Foresee	17	6.4	spot	5	5.4
compound	113	7.3	Increase	70	6.4	experience	8	5.3
remain	119	7.0	Acknowledge	19	6.3	encounter	5	5.2
get	380	6.9	Discuss	32	6.2	provoke	5	5.2
consider	134	6.9	Ease	16	6.2	be	821	5.2
exacerbate	82	6.8	Underestimate	14	6.1	save	8	5.0
understand	96	6.7	Anticipate	15	6.1	bring	19	4.9
grow	95	6.6	Emphasise	15	6.0	start	10	4.8
become	146	6.6	Appreciate	15	5.9	prevent	8	4.7
crease	66	6.5	Explain	22	5.9	think	17	4.7
approach	73	6.4	Breathe	12	5.9	create	14	4.6
involve	111	6.4	Perceive	14	5.8	get	59	4.6
handle	66	6.3	Reflect	22	5.8	give	56	4.6
bring	105	6.3	Recognise	18	5.8	stop	6	4.5
recognise	69	6.3	Raise	34	5.8	make	77	4.5
ease	60	6.3	Demonstrate	15	5.8	develop	12	4.3
examine	71	6.3	Minimise	11	5.7	face	7	4.3
suffer	64	6.2	Report	20	5.7	share	5	4.2
underlie	57	6.1	Understand	20	5.6	keep	12	4.1
relate	56	6.0	Exacerbate	9	5.5	bear	5	3.9
reduce	76	6.0	Confront	10	5,5	see	33	3.9
cure	48	6.0	Underline	9	5.4	know	13	3.7
define	58	6.0	Indicate	13	5.3	buy	5	3.6
see	205	6.0	admit	10	5.2	find	9	3.3
think	82	6.0	tackle	9	5.2	need	5	2.8
explain	54	5.9	outline	9	5.2	put	6	2.7
eliminate	46	5.9	suffer	12	5.2	follow	6	2.6
combat	42	5.8	address	10	5.1	do	12	2.5
prevent	52	5.8	identify	14	5.1	say	13	2.4
analyse	44	5.8	emphasize	7	5.0			2.4
illustrate	44	5.7	continue	12	5.0			
study	45	5.7	be	834	5.0			
ignore	41	5.6	consider	19	5.0			
report	44	5.6	realise	7	4.9			

confront	36	5.6	stress	7	4.8			
find	91	5.6	note	7	4.7			
teethe	34	5.6	recognize	7	4.7			
outline	36	5.5	reveal	8	4.6			
share	42	5.5	describe	12	4.5			
mention	40	5.5	imagine	6	4.5			
sort	34	5.5	assess	7	4.5			
increase	60	5.5	think	17	4.5			
anticipate	33	5.5	concern	12	4.4			
aggravate	32	5.5	blame	5	4.4			
perceive	34	5.4	suggest	8	4.4			
continue	39	5.4	share	8	4.4			
investigate	35	5.4	mention	7	4.4			
describe	43	5.4	meet	13	4.3			
recognize	33	5.4	read	9	4.3			
press	33	5.3	relate	6	4.3			
foresee	29	5.3	show	18	4.3			
prove	31	5.2	grow	8	4.2			
connect	30	5.2	remain	8	4.2			
know	63	5.2	underlie	5	4.2			
indicate	32	5.2	produce	15	4.2			
meet	42	5.2	operate	6	4.1			
set	43	5.1	expect	9	4.0			
treat	31	5.1	express	7	4.0			
round	31	5.1	see	43	4.0			
leave	56	5.0	reduce	9	3.9			
reveal	29	5.0	feel	8	3.8			
develop	40	5.0	give	35	3.8			
say	96	5.0	examine	5	3.8			
believe	27	4.9	place	6	3.8			
attack	24	4.9	know	16	3.8			
deal	22	4.9	remove	5	3.7			
answer	23	4.8	introduce	5	3.5			
recur	20	4.8	include	10	3.4			
give	83	4.8	make	36	3.2			
mount	21	4.7	bring	7	3.2			
put	42	4.7	follow	9	2.9			
generate	22	4.7	provide	10	2.9			
worsen	19	4.7	develop	5	2.9			
exist	22	4.7	do	7	1.6			
constitute	21	4.7	get	7	1.4			
acknowledge	20	4.7	say	6	1.3			
concern	28	4.7						
correct	19	4.7						
explore	20	4.6						
produce	34	4.6						
er	22	4.6						

Appendix C

Verbs collocating with the nouns problem, difficulty and trouble as subjects

problem			difficulty			trouble		
Items	**Freq.**	**Score**	**Items**	**Freq.**	**Score**	**Items**	**Freq.**	**Score**
Arise	559	10.2	Arise	162	9.5			
Solve	275	9.7	Face	62	8.1			
Face	293	9.3	Lie	51	7.4			
Lie	135	7.9	Swallow	10	7.0			
Exist	106	7.9	Encounter	10	6.9			
remain	113	7.4	Cope	9	6.9			
Occur	86	7.4	Confront	10	6.9			
Confront	54	7.3	Find	53	6.8			
Relate	58	7.0	Stem	9	6.7			
Be	5.371	7.0	Beset	7	6.6			
Affect	56	6.9	Get	66	6.6			
Concern	50	6.9	Remember	11	6.6			
Involve	60	6.8	Keep	22	6.5			
stem	38	6.8	Obtain	9	6.3	start	58	7.3
Seem	84	6.6	Persuade	6	6.1	brew	7	6.8
Get	88	6.5	Prevent	7	6.0	find	45	6.6
Encounter	31	6.5	Compound	5	6.0	get	61	6.5
Emerge	38	6.5	Gain	8	5.9	erupt	6	6.4
Beset	26	6.3	Emerge	9	5.7	begin	46	6.3
Result	28	6.2	Maintain	6	5.6	flare	5	6.2
Start	44	6.2	Remain	20	5.5	mar	5	6.2
Become	73	6.1	Result	6	5.5	stem	5	5.9
Surround	28	6.1	Involve	13	5.5	understand	6	5.8
Require	34	6.0	Occur	12	5.5	arise	12	5.7
Find	47	6.0	Surround	7	5.5	keep	11	5.6
Begin	54	6.0	Control	6	5.5	occur	9	5.1
Come	96	5.8	Understand	5	5.4	break	7	5.0
Do	151	5.8	Present	7	5.3	come	43	4.9
Appear	37	5.8	Identify	5	5.3	lie	9	4.9
Have	678	5.7	Cause	11	5.3	be	1192	4.8
Include	41	5.6	Concern	6	5.2	seem	13	4.4
Persist	17	5.6	Exist	7	5.1	appear	8	4.3
Regard	20	5.6	Learn	5	5.1	try	5	3.9
Cause	25	5.6	Raise	7	5.1	follow	9	3.8
Develop	22	5.5	Explain	6	5.0	continue	5	3.8
Need	26	5.2	Hold	12	5.0	do	18	2.9
Force	14	5.2	Express	5	4.9	make	8	2.7
Plague	12	5.2	Accept	5	4.9	go	9	2.7
Tend	18	5.2	Affect	6	4.8	have	50	1.9
Go	58	5.1	Believe	6	4.6	say	7	1.6
Keep	17	5.1	Try	7	4.3			
raise	15	5.0	Make	23	4.2			
continue	20	5.0	begin	11	4.2			
trouble	10	4.9	be	761	4.2			
try	18	4.9	see	9	4.2			
afflict	9	4.8	start	6	4.0			
lead	18	4.8	use	10	4.0			
reach	13	4.8	move	5	3.9			
loom	9	4.8	become	12	3.9			
disappear	10	4.7	seem	9	3.8			
bedevil	8	4.6	appear	6	3.8			
cope	8	4.6	lead	5	3.6			
present	10	4.5	tell	6	3.6			

dominate	9	4.5	come	17	3.5			
pose	8	4.5	need	5	3.5			
mean	12	4.4	know	5	3.4			
hit	9	4.4	do	26	3.4			
turn	13	4.4	have	126	3.3			
centre	7	4.4	follow	6	3.2			
follow	18	4.3	include	5	3.1			
exercise	7	4.3	go	7	2.3			
prevent	7	4.3	take	5	2.1			
make	29	4.3						
increase	9	4.3						
prove	8	4.2						
threaten	7	4.2						
report	9	4.1						
apply	7	4.0						
provide	12	4.0						
use	14	4.0						
bring	9	4.0						
add	7	3.9						
meet	7	3.8						
grow	7	3.7						
call	9	3.7						
put	8	3.7						
show	11	3.6						
run	7	3.4						
see	7	3.2						
give	8	3.0						
take	10	2.8						

مقاربة لغوية للمتون لدراسة متلازمات الاسماء المترادفة : مشكلة، صعوبة ، عناء

سوسن حازم حسن
كلية الآداب
جامعة بغداد
sawsan@coart.uobaghdad.edu.iq

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الملخص:

يتناول البحث الترتيب الأبجدي لمرادفات الأسماء: (مشكلة، صعوبة، عناء) لإيجاد المُتلازمات في استعمال هذه الأسماء في قاعدة البيانات البريطانية، بالاعتماد على الأنماط الدلاليّة والنحويّة. وهذه المُتلازمات هي وسيلة مُهمّة ومقبولة لمُتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية؛ لأنّها تُبيّن ظهور كلمتين أو أكثر بشكل كبير في النص. وعليه فإنّ تعلّم كيفيّة تشكيل المُتلازمات عمليّة مُعقّدة للمُتعلمين، لذا تعتمد الدراسة على الخصائص اللغويّة لتشكيل المُتلازمات، دون الاعتماد بشكل واسع على الاستعمال الاعتباطي لهذه المُتلازمات. وهذا يدلّ أنّ مُتعلمي اللغة بحاجة إلى شرح البناء اللغوي لهذه التراكيب؛ عن طريق دراسة الخصائص اللغوية، مثل: الدلالة، والتركيبات الجُمليّة والدلالية دون الاعتماد كثيرًا على القواميس، التي تعرض معاني الكلمات المختلفة مع الأمثلة، دون شرح الاستعمالات والمعاني المختلفة للمُترادفات. وتظهرُ النتائج أنّ بعض التراكيب مبنيّة حسب أنماط مُحدّدة وفق بناء لغوي ثابت تساهم في توضيح المُتلازمات، وتبيّن الدراسة أنّ الخصائص اللغوية مطلوبة لتسهيل عمليّة تعلّم المُتلازمات، ويتضمّن ذلك الخصائص النحوية والدلالية لكلّ مُتلازمة لتحديد الاستخدام الدقيق لها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المتلازمات، المرادفات، المتون، الترتيب الأبجدي، اعتباطي.