Paper 119 – Education

THE COLLOCATIONS OF SELECTED PAIRS OF SYNONYMOUS ADJECTIVES: A CORPUS LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Utilizing the Corpus of Contemporary American English as the source data and employing the corpus-driven approach, this study examines the collocations of seven pairs of near-synonymous adjectives (able-capable, conventional-customary, kind-benevolent, sick-ailing, simple-plain, sudden-unexpected, weary-exhausted). The study shows that these lexical pairs have fine-grained usage differences, and they are not at all equivalent in their use. It concludes that each pair, though labeled as synonymous does not, in fact, behave synonymously in the corpus; each has its own context of use. The near synonyms' collocations show that each of them developed its particular usage, in which they cannot be interchanged in all contexts.