

## The Study of Adjective *Admirable* and Its Near Synonyms in *Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)*

Ni Wayan Manik Septianiari Putri<sup>\*</sup>, I Made Rajeg<sup>2</sup>, I Ketut Wandia<sup>3</sup>

<sup>[123]</sup>English Department Faculty of Arts, Udayana University

<sup>1</sup>[manikseptianiari@gmail.com] <sup>2</sup>[made\_rajeg@unud.ac.id]

<sup>3</sup>[wandia57@yahoo.com.au]

<sup>\*</sup>*Corresponding Author*

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui distribusi penggunaan kata sifat *admirable* dan sinonimnya, yaitu *commendable*, *laudable*, dan *estimable*; menjelaskan struktur kolokasi kata tersebut dan menganalisis maknanya.

Data yang digunakan bersumber dari *Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)* yang mencakup lima ranah, yaitu ranah bahasa lisan, fiksi, majalah, surat kabar, dan akademik. Data dikumpulkan melalui metode korpus dengan pendekatan kuantitatif dan kualitatif. Data yang ditemukan dianalisis dengan teori kolokasi yang diusulkan oleh Benson, dkk didukung dengan Quirk, dkk, dan teori makna oleh Leech.

Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa *admirable* merupakan kata sifat dengan jumlah frekuensi penggunaan tertinggi, yaitu 500 penggunaan dan yang terendah yaitu *estimable* dengan 177 penggunaan. Dalam hal kolokasi leksikal jenis pertama, yakni kata sifat + kata benda, frekuensi penggunaan tertinggi yaitu *admirable* + kata benda yang memiliki 457 penggunaan. Sementara itu, yang terendah yakni *estimable* + kata benda memiliki 96 penggunaan. Selanjutnya, jenis kolokasi leksikal yang lain yaitu kata keterangan + kata sifat. Pada jenis ini, penggunaan tertinggi yakni kata sifat + *admirable* yang memiliki 351 penggunaan. Namun, yang terendah yaitu kata keterangan + *estimable* yang memiliki 26 penggunaan. Dilihat dari fungsinya, fungsi atributif muncul pada kolokasi leksikal jenis pertama. Sementara itu, fungsi atributif dan predikatif muncul pada kolokasi leksikal jenis kedua. Makna yang ditemukan yakni makna kolokasi dan konseptual.

Kata kunci: kata sifat, sinonim, corpus

### 1. Background of the Study

Language is a tool that can be used to communicate and express meaning. According to Hurford (1983:1), the study of meaning in language is called Semantics. English is an International language. Many people around the world use English as their language, although they come from different countries and

cultures. It means that they are able to understand each other. According to Crystal (2007), English has a larger number of words.

In all languages, antonym and synonym have important role. It means that by using antonym and synonym, people can improve their vocabularies, especially English. According to Hornby (2010:54), antonym is a word that means opposite of another word, for example *happy* and *sad*. Meanwhile, synonym is a word or expression that has the same or nearly the same meaning as another in the same language (Hornby, 2010:1515). *Admirable* and *commendable* .

Synonym is a very interesting topic to be discussed. English learners need many various words in order to improve their vocabularies. It can be used in written forms such as an essay. This example of written forms, essay, will be more beautiful with various words which have similar meaning.

The four synonymous adjectives *admirable*, *commendable*, *laudable*, and *estimable* are used in this study in order to see the frequency of use, to identify their collocational structure that consists of words they collocate with and functions. According to Quirk, et al (1985) adjectives have their own syntactic functions, namely predicative and attributive. Furthermore, the four synonymous adjectives are used to explore their meanings found in all genres (spoken, fiction, magazine, newspaper, and academic) in COCA.

## **2. Problems of the Study**

Based on the above explanation, the problems can be formulated as follows:

1. What is the distribution of the four synonymous adjectives *admirable*, *commendable*, *laudable*, and *estimable* used in COCA like?
2. What is the collocational structure of the four synonymous adjectives *admirable*, *commendable*, *laudable*, and *estimable* used in COCA like?
3. What is the meaning of the four synonymous adjectives *admirable*, *commendable*, *laudable*, and *estimable* used in COCA?

## **3. Aims of the Study**

The aims of this study are:

1. To identify the distribution of the four synonymous adjectives *admirable*, *commendable*, *laudable*, and *estimable* used in COCA.

2. To explain the collocational structure of the four synonymous adjectives *admirable*, *commendable*, *laudable*, and *estimable* used in COCA.
3. To explore the meaning of the four synonymous adjectives *admirable*, *commendable*, *laudable*, and *estimable* used in COCA.

#### 4. Research Method

This study used documentation method in collecting the data which was applied by accessing COCA on [corpus.byu.edu/coca](http://corpus.byu.edu/coca). Furthermore, the quantitative and qualitative methods were used in analyzing the data. Quantitative method was applied in order to calculate the data; meanwhile, qualitative method was used in order to give an actual explanation descriptively. Descriptive qualitative method was used to explain the collocational structure based on the theory by Benson, et al (1986) and supported by Quirk, et al (1985) and to explore the meaning based on the theory of meaning by Leech (1974).

#### 5. Findings and Discussions

The discussions of *admirable* and its near synonyms are described in this section. The data are tabulated into the table in order to see the distribution of the four synonymous adjectives and make the explanation clear based on the table.

##### 1. The Distribution of Synonymous Adjectives *Admirable*, *Commendable*, *Laudable*, and *Estimable* in COCA

	SPOK	FIC	MAG	NEWS	ACAD	TOTAL
Admirable	100	100	100	100	100	500
Commendable	58	66	100	100	100	424
Laudable	41	31	100	100	100	372
Estimable	11	28	51	51	36	177

*Table 1. The Distribution of Synonymous Adjectives*

From table 1 above, it can be seen that there is a gap among the use of four synonymous adjectives in COCA. The adjective *admirable* is mostly used in COCA. This adjective has the highest frequency of use. *Admirable* occupies 500 usages. However, *commendable* is lower than *admirable* which occupies 424

usages. Adjective *laudable* has 372 usages. It means that *laudable* is lower than *commendable*. *Estimable* is the lowest with 177 usages. The rank of the use of the four synonymous words from highest to lowest is *admirable*, *commendable*, *laudable*, and *estimable*.

Looking across the genres in spoken, fiction, magazine, newspaper, and academic, the three near synonyms, *admirable*, *commendable*, and *laudable* are the highest in magazine, newspaper, and academic where each adjective has 100 usages. However, the two near synonyms of adjectives *commendable* and *laudable* are lower in spoken and fiction. Adjective *commendable* is the lowest in spoken with 58 usages. *Laudable* is the lowest in fiction with 31 usages. It means that people rarely use the word *laudable* in fiction.

In contrast with the three synonyms, the adjective *estimable* is the highest in magazine and newspaper; it has 51 usages. *Estimable* has 36 usages in academic, 28 usages in fiction, and the lowest is in spoken with 11 usages. Therefore, the four synonyms are the highest in magazine and newspaper. It is because people like using these words in the written articles like in magazine and newspaper.

## 2. The Collocational Structure of Synonymous Adjectives *Admirable*, *Commendable*, *Laudable*, and *Estimable* Found in COCA

The collocational structure was analyzed using the theory of collocation by Benson, et al (1986) and the functions of the four synonymous adjectives were analyzed using the theory proposed by Quirk, et al (1985).

### 2.1 Adjective + Noun

Adjective followed by noun is one of the lexical collocation types proposed by Benson, et al (1986). This lexical collocation is analyzed based on all genres *spoken*, *fiction*, *magazine*, *newspaper*, and *academic*. The four synonymous adjectives followed by noun in COCA are analyzed as follows.

	SPOK	FIC	MAG	NEWS	ACAD	TOTAL
Admirable + Noun	58	100	100	99	100	457
Commendable + Noun	12	18	66	39	53	188
Laudable + Noun	21	23	52	47	99	242
Estimable + Noun	6	16	27	29	18	96

Table 2. Adjective + Noun in COCA

Based on table 2, it can be seen that the highest frequency of use of four synonymous adjectives is *admirable*. This adjective has 457 usages in the collocation where in fiction, magazine, and academic English has 100 usages, in newspaper it has 99 usages, and the lowest is in spoken with 58 usages. Meanwhile, *laudable* is the second highest frequency of use. It has 242 usages. The highest usage is in academic where this adjective has 99 usages, in magazine has 52 usages, in newspaper has 47 usages, in fiction has 23 usages, and the lowest is in spoken with 21 usages.

While *commendable* has 188 usages in the collocation, it has the highest frequency of use in magazine that is 66 usages. In academic it has 53 usages, in newspaper it has 39 usages, in fiction has 18, and the lowest is in spoken where it has 12 usages. In contrast with the other synonymous adjectives, *estimable* is the lowest frequency of use in the collocation. It has 96 usages in all genres. *Laudable* is the highest frequency of use in newspaper which has 29 usages, in magazine 27 usages, in academic has 18 usages, in fiction has 16 usages, and the lowest in spoken with 6 usages.

From table 2, it can be concluded that four synonymous adjectives have the lowest frequency of use in spoken. Meanwhile the highest frequency of use of *admirable* is in fiction, magazine, and academic English. *Commendable* has the highest frequency of use in magazine, *laudable* has the highest frequency of use in academic, and *estimable* has the highest frequency of use in newspaper.

1. Well, Margaret, I think that's an **admirable idea**.

Data 1 shows that *admirable* in the noun phrase *admirable idea* functions as attributive. It is because this adjective refers to the noun *idea*. It means that there is an admirable idea from Margaret that can inspire others. This adjective appears between article *an* and noun *idea*.

2. It was truly a **commendable concept**.

The adjective *commendable* in data 2 appears after the article *a* and before the noun *concept*. This adjective, *commendable*, modifies the noun *concept*. Furthermore, it can be said that this adjective a modifier. Therefore, it is attributive in function.

3. You may have had less than **laudable motives** to start out, but you've got good business sense about acquisitions.

Data 3 shows that *laudable* appears before noun *motives*. It can be said that this adjective is as the modifier of noun *motives*. Thus, the function of adjective *laudable* is attributive.

4. That was an **estimable achievement** for a film, but a limited one.

The adjective *estimable* appears after the article *an* and before the noun *achievement*. This adjective refers to the noun *achievement* that there is an excellent achievement. Furthermore, it can be said that this adjective modifies the noun *achievement*. Therefore, the function of *estimable* in data 4 is attributive.

## 2.2 Adverb + Adjective

Adverb followed by adjective is one of the lexical collocation types. There are four adjectives analyzed in this section, namely *admirable*, *commendable*, *laudable*, and *estimable*.

	SPOK	FIC	MAG	NEWS	ACAD	TOTAL
Adverb + Admirable	64	54	100	50	83	351
Adverb + Commendable	24	12	18	13	25	92
Adverb + Laudable	7	5	18	19	23	72
Adverb + Estimable	1	4	7	5	9	26

Table 3. Adverb + Adjective in COCA

Based on table 3, it can be seen that there is the significant gap among adverb followed by four synonymous adjectives. The highest frequency of use is in adverb followed by the adjective *admirable*. It has 351 usages where in magazine it has 100 usages, in academic has 83 usages, in spoken has 64 usage, in fiction has 54 usages, and the lowest is in newspaper with 50 usages. The second highest frequency of use is adverb followed by *commendable*. In contrast with adverb followed by *admirable*, the total of frequency of use in adverb followed by *commendable* is 92 usages. In adverb followed by *commendable* the highest frequency of use is in academic it has 25 usages, in spoken has 24 usages, in magazine has 18 usages, in newspaper has 13 usages, and in fiction has 12 usages.

Meanwhile, adverb followed by *laudable* has 72 usages where the highest frequency of use is in academic has 23 usages. In newspaper has 19 usages, in magazine has 18 usages, in spoken has 7 usages, and the lowest is in fiction with 5 usages. The total frequencies of use of adverb followed by *estimable* is 26 usages. It is the lowest frequency of use among the four synonymous adjectives. The highest frequency of use is adverb followed by *estimable*; in academic it has 9 usages. In magazine it has 7 usages, in newspaper it has 5 usages, in fiction it has 4 usages, and the lowest is in spoken with 1 usage.

5. THEROUX: She's a **very admirable** woman, Irish woman.

Data 5 shows that the adjective *admirable* appears between adverb *very* and noun *woman*. This adjective modifies the noun *woman*. Furthermore, it explains that the subject *she* as Irish woman is very admirable woman. Therefore, the function of this adjective is attributive.

6. I read your first book. **Very commendable.**

The adjective phrase in data 6 consists of adverb *very* followed by adjective *commendable*. From its position, *commendable* is predicative in function because this adjective refers to previous noun phrase, *your first book*.

7. His intentions were **perfectly laudable.**

Based on data 7, the adjective *laudable* appears after the adverb *perfectly*. From this position, it can be considered that this adjective belongs to predicative in function. The reason is that this adjective refers to subject *his intentions*.

8. One hundred kinds of the **most estimable** apples cultivated in our country.

Data 8 shows that the adjective *estimable* appears after the adverb *most* and before the noun *apples*. From this position, the adjective *estimable* is attributive in function. The reason is that this adjective modifies noun *apples*.

### **3. The Meaning of Synonymous Adjectives *Admirable*, *Commendable*, *Laudable*, and *Estimable* Found in COCA**

The meaning of synonymous adjectives is analyzed using the theory proposed by Leech (1974).

9. "You are an **admirable** astronomer, but you make a less than admirable theologian. I have spoken of this before. "

*Admirable* astronomer means that astronomer who is admired by people. It is because the astronomer can inspire others. Therefore, the meaning in data 9 is collocative meaning. The reason is that the adjective *admirable* collocates with noun *astronomer*.

10. This department shows a very **commendable** profit on its operations.

*Commendable* in data 10 means awesome. This adjective collocates with the noun phrase *profit*. Therefore, the meaning of *commendable* above is collocative meaning.

11. The results were **laudable**.

*Laudable* based on data 11 means to be praised. Therefore, the meaning of the *laudable* is conceptual meaning because it is based on the dictionary.

12. People called her looks **estimable**.

Data 12 shows that *estimable* is conceptual in meaning. It is because this adjective means to be admired. Furthermore, *estimable* refers to noun phrase *her looks*.

## 6. Conclusion

Based on the foregoing analysis and discussion, the following points can be drawn as conclusion: the four synonymous adjectives have different frequency of use in each genre. The highest frequency of use among those synonymous adjectives is *admirable* which has 500 frequency of use. Meanwhile, *estimable* is the lowest which has 177 usages from all genres.

In the first type of the lexical collocation, the highest frequency of use is *admirable* + noun where it has 457 usages while the lowest is *estimable* + noun which has 96 usages. Furthermore, the attributive function appears in this first type. In the second type, adverb + adjective, the highest frequency of use is adverb + *admirable*. It has 351 usages from all genres. Meanwhile, the lowest is adverb + *estimable* which has 26 usages. Furthermore, the lowest is adverb + *estimable* which has 26 usages. Based on the functions of adjective, both attributive and predicative functions appear in the second type of the lexical collocation.



The meanings found in the four synonymous adjectives are conceptual and collocative meaning. The reason is that this study focused on the meaning of the four synonymous adjectives in the phrase and the data to be discussed are limited.

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