

## **SYNONYMS AND CORPUS ANALYSIS: ON ABOUT AND AROUND**

**Muthyala Udaya**

Assistant Professor

The English and Foreign Languages University, India

udaya@efluniversity.ac.in

---

**ABSTRACT:** *This paper presents an exploratory corpus study of synonymous prepositions 'about' and 'around' and compares their usage and distribution differences, patterns, and similarities. The data sources are dictionaries that explain the relationship the two synonyms share, situational and contextual usage and the distinct meanings while transforming into other parts of speech. This study demonstrates the affinity between the two words and the immeasurable meanings and semantic relations they share. Finally, a corpus-based analysis of the two words reveals the collocations, frequency and context collocations they significantly occur.*

**KEYWORDS:** Language analysis, corpus, dictionary, similarities, distribution

---

### **INTRODUCTION**

Dictionaries help in knowing the meanings of each word, its origin, contextual and situation meaning, and the literary meaning. Apart from providing meanings, they help in quick referencing, and more independent learning and synonymy are linguistic features considered one of the most challenging aspects of language, especially for second language learners. It may be perceived as the fundamental concept in lexicology. When meaning relations of words are studied, most researchers tend to prioritise the concepts of synonyms in their investigations (Harley, 2006). Linguists interested in Semantics use this for the relationship of similarity or sameness of meaning between two or more words (Jackson and Amvela, 2000). Many words in English appear very close in meaning to each other. However, linguists and scholars have a widely accepted consensus that a perfect synonym does not exist; namely, no two words can be genuinely identical in their meaning, connotation, frequency, and appropriateness. Liu (2010) argues that synonyms are not entirely identical in meaning; thus, not all synonyms are used interchangeably. Therefore, there are often subtle meaning differences within a pair of synonyms that do not allow us to use them interchangeably. Although two or more words may have similar denotational meanings, the context in which they are used is often not the same. The complexity of synonyms has led to the widely-held belief that "true synonymy" is either rare or does not exist at all (Jackson & Amvela,

2004, p.93). In understanding the complexity of synonyms, dictionaries are the primary tool for language learners.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Synonymy, or semantic equivalence, is an essential yet intricate linguistic feature in lexical semantics. Synonyms are not entirely interchangeable; instead, they differ in shades of meaning and vary in their connotations, implications, and register (DiMarco et al., 1993). Any natural-language consists of many synonymous words, especially English, which is rich in synonyms due to historical reasons, enabling English speakers "to convey meanings more precisely and effectively for the right audience and context" (Liu & Espino, 2012, p. 198). It thus comes to no surprise that an essential aspect of English linguistics is to find the proper measures of automatically identifying and extracting synonyms (Peirsman, Geeraerts & Speelman, 2015) and of distinguishing one word from its synonyms or near-synonyms (Hanks, 1996; Biber et al., 1998; Gries, 2001; Xiao & McEnery, 2006; Divjak, 2006; Gries & Otani, 2010; Liu, 2010; Hu & Yang, 2015).

### Corpus approaches to synonymy

The past decades have witnessed significant advances in corpus analysis and synonymy, with the advent of computers with the central idea of corpus semantics. Based on the Brown Corpus, Miller & Charles (1991) find that no two words are judged to be substitutable in the same linguistic context (i.e. the exact location in a sentence), the more synonymous they are in meaning. Church et al. (1994) employ a "lexical substitutability" test in a corpus study of the near-synonyms task for *request* and *demand*, which produced the same finding: the substitutability of lexical items in the same linguistic context constitutes a good indicator of their semantic similarity. Gries (2001) quantifies the similarity between English adjectives ending in -ic or -ical (like economic and economical) based on the overlap between their collocations. Gilquin (2003) investigates the difference between the English causative verbs *get* and *have*. Glynn (2007) compares intra- and extralinguistic factors in the contexts of *hassle*, *bother* and *annoy*. Gries and Otani (2010) studied the synonyms *big*, *great* and *large* and their antonyms *little*, *small* and *tiny*. Other sets of synonyms that have attracted attention include *strong* and *powerful* (Church et al., 1991), *absolutely*, *completely* and *entirely* (Partington, 1998), *big*, *large* and *great* (Biber et al., 1998), *quake* and *quiver* (Atkins & Levin, 1995), *principal*, *primary*, *chief*, *main* and *major* (Liu, 2010), and *actually*, *genuinely*, *really*, and *truly* (Liu & Espino, 2012)

## Distinguishing Near-Synonyms

Near-synonyms can be examined through descriptive comparison and quantitative analysis. Collinson (1939) is an example of earlier descriptive studies, which used semantic features to distinguish synonyms. Collinson's list consisted of elements such as 'general/specific applicability,' 'intensity,' 'emotion,' 'moral approbation,' 'professionalism,' 'written/non-written,' 'colloquialism,' 'local/dialect,' and 'child talk.' Some of these (e.g., 'general/specific' and 'written/non-written') are still commonly used, while others (e.g., 'intensity,' 'emotion,' and 'colloquialism') are discussed at the discourse level.

## METHODOLOGY

In conducting this study, *about* and *around* were examined. The data was derived from the three learner's dictionaries. The selected dictionaries are Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English 5th edition, LDOCE (2009), Collins Online Dictionary and Cambridge online dictionary, COD (2016) provided information about meanings, degree of formality, collocations, significant grammatical patterns. In addition to the three dictionaries, the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) and Wordnet 3.1 were other significant data sources. The following corpus tools were examined to find the synonyms for '*about*' and '*around*'

**Wordnet-3.1:** It is an online lexical resource that enables a search for semantically related words and compares the meanings of both verbs with the meanings.

Based on the criteria used in the study, the results of the study are discussed in terms of meanings, degree of formality, collocation and grammatical structures.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on BNC, COCA, Wordnet 3.1 and dictionaries, the two prepositions were analysed to find the most frequently used preposition. The results of the search items are as follows:

**Dictionaries:** Dictionaries help understand various meanings of words, expand learners vocabulary and increase awareness of common grammatical errors. Dictionaries carry additional information and allow readers to compare the meanings of two or more words to achieve a more holistic understanding of the vocabulary item. The dictionary definitions on *about* and *around* are nearly close synonyms with multiple features, as is clear from the following data.

**(LDOCE 2009)**

*about*: concerning or relating to a particular subject

1. little more or less than a particular number, amount or size
2. be *about* something, not be *about* to do something

*around*:

1. moving in a circle, in an area near a place or person
2. surrounding, on all sides of something or someone
3. *all-around*: an *all-around* athlete

**(collinsdictionary.com)**

*about*:

1. *around*, on all the sides
2. on every side, all *around on* the move, in the vicinity

*around*:

1. in a circle, along a circular course, circumference
2. on the move, *about*, existing living
3. on the circumference, border, or outer part

**(thesaurus.com, dictionary.com)**

*about*:

1. of concern, in regard to
2. moving *around*, astir, prevalent, in existence
3. near in time, number, degree, approximately

*around*:

1. in a circle ring or the like, to surround a person, a group, thing
2. *about*, on all the sides, encircling, encompassing
3. ----

**(COD 2016)**

*about*:

1. Approximately, almost, all directions
2. intending, be *about* to do something
3. concerning or relating to a particular subject

*around*:

1. Approximately

It appears from the above definitions that the words are synonymous and defined in terms of each other.

### Corpus Analysis

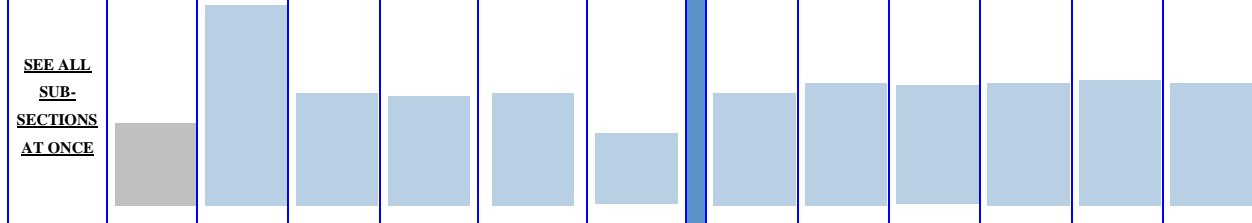
Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) is the largest freely-available corpus of English and the only large and balanced corpus of American English. Mark Davis of Brigham Young University created this corpus, and it is used by ten thousand users every month (linguists, teachers, translators, and other researchers). COCA corpus comprises more than 560 million words in 220,225 texts, including 20 million words each year from 1990-2017. The most recent addition of texts (Jan 2016 - Dec 2017) and completed in December 2017. Because of its design, it is perhaps the only corpus suitable for current language changes.

- a. Frequency
- b. Style and text type preference
- c. Collocability

COCA Corpus reveal the following aspects.

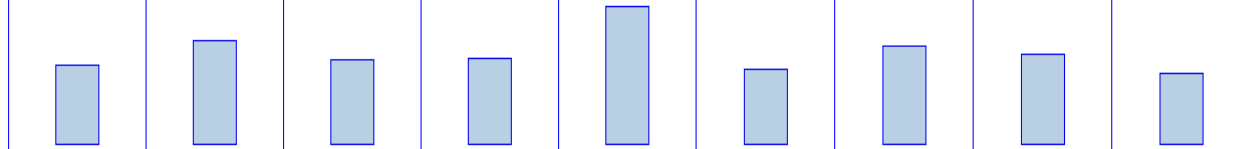
1. Frequency. *about* is more than twice (2.29 times) more frequent than *around* in COCA Corpus. It has 1560869 occurrences, while *around* has 379873. *about* is more frequent in the spoken genre and *around* is more frequent in the fiction genre. *about* occurs 2702.34 times per million whereas *around* occurs 657.67 times per million.
2. Text type preference. COCA consists of five genres (Spoken, Fiction, Magazine, News, Academics) with forty-three sub-corpora with different text types. The distribution of two prepositions (*about*, *around*) in the sub-corpora is as follows:

Table 1. *about*

SECTION	ALL	SPOKEN	FICTION	MAGAZIN E	NEWSPAPE R	ACADEMI C	1990-1994	1995-1999	2000-2004	2005-2009	2010-2014	2015-2017
FREQ	1560869	524131	277581	289711	288720	180726	265268	280323	274546	280870	287008	172854
WORDS (M)	577	116.7	111.8	117.4	113.0	111.4	104.0	103.4	102.9	102.0	102.9	62.3
PER MIL	2,702.34	4,489.40	2,481.83	2,468.69	2,555.15	1,622.16	2,550.68	2,709.82	2,667.03	2,752.52	2,788.89	2,774.13
<u>SEE ALL SUB- SECTIONS AT ONCE</u>												

Shows different genres from COCA corpus and year-wise distribution of the preposition *about*

Table 1a.

ABC	NBC	CBS	CNN	FOX	MSNBC	PBS	NPR	Indep
77958	42304	69514	113182	55491	3877	41849	100495	19725
15.5	6.3	12.9	20.7	6.3	0.8	6.6	17.4	4.3
5,024.86	6,663.48	5,394.00	5,479.15	8,804.02	4,761.99	6,329.06	5,775.67	4,541.43
								

Shows the frequency of the word *about* in Spoken sub-corpora

The above columns give the raw frequencies of the words in the spoken sub-corpora, and the rightmost column converts those figures to comparable frequencies per one million words. The table shows that *about* is highly frequent in spoken texts, especially in ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN, FOX, MSNBC, PBS, NPR, Independent. Fox News is more popular with the highest frequency of *about*, and in fiction magazines, newspapers and academic are not highly favoured, whereas fox

news is more strongly favoured in the news media with 55491 occurrences covering 6.3% of the whole spoken texts.

**Table 2**

SECTION	ALL	SPOKEN	FICTION	MAGAZINE	NEWSPAPER	ACADEMIC	1990-1994	1995-1999	2000-2004	2005-2009	2010-2014	2015-2017
FREQ	379873	74351	136454	78451	61333	29284	64989	67955	68659	68342	68695	41233
WORDS (M)	577	116.7	111.8	117.4	113.0	111.4	104.0	103.4	102.9	102.0	102.9	62.3
PER MIL	657.67	636.85	1,220.03	668.50	542.79	262.85	624.90	656.91	666.98	669.75	667.52	661.75
<u>SEE ALL SUB-SECTIONS AT ONCE</u>												

Shows the frequency and year-wise distribution of the word *around*

**Table 2a**

Gen (Book)	Gen (Jrnl)	SciFi/Fant	Juvenile	Movies
41462	48768	27980	4161	14179
24.5	32.1	20.0	3.2	8.9
1,693.48	1,520.47	1,402.03	1,317.40	1,585.69

Shows the frequency in fiction sub-corpora of the word *around in Fiction*

The above columns give the raw frequencies of the words in the sub-corpora, and the fiction genre has the highest number of occurrences, i.e., 136454 and 1220.03 per million words. Within the fiction genre, general journals occupy the highest frequency with 48768 frequency, and 32.15 coverage with 1520.47 per million words, *around* occurs in general books, science fiction, juvenile, movies and general journals.

Two synonymous prepositions, when compared, frequencies vary along with the genres. Spoken and Fiction genres represent a whole set of subject-related words, and the COCA corpus provides a comprehensive representation of these two words, which helps distinguish the meaning clearly.

1. Collocability: COCA corpus provides a facility through which the most significant collocates of any word in the corpus can be discovered. Four words on either side of a word are seen as its collocates. T-score calculations indicate their significance and sort the words accordingly. The most significant collocates of *about* and *around* are given below.

<u><i>about</i></u>					<u><i>around</i></u>				
Collocation	FREQ	All	%	MI	Collocation	FREQ	All	%	MI
<i>talk</i>	79990	185391	43.15	4.30	<i>world</i>	21516	408426	5.27	3.31
<i>talking</i>	75445	130859	57.65	4.72	<i>turn</i>	7809	125174	6.24	3.55
<i>talked</i>	27069	53666	50.44	4.53	<i>turned</i>	6188	142152	4.35	3.03
<i>thinking</i>	22696	94784	23.94	3.45	<i>neck</i>	5404	34558	15.64	4.88
<i>worry</i>	18216	38124	47.78	4.45	<i>arms</i>	5005	66011	7.58	3.83
<i>concerned</i>	15811	47024	33.62	3.94	<i>corner</i>	4630	40700	11.38	4.42
<i>worried</i>	15095	31331	48.18	4.46	<i>wrapped</i>	4240	14980	28.30	5.73
<i>talks</i>	7959	27330	29.12	3.73	<i>arm</i>	4027	51846	7.77	3.87
<i>concerns</i>	7764	39924	19.45	3.15	<i>walk</i>	3067	67240	4.56	3.10
<i>excited</i>	4965	18594	26.70	3.61	<i>walking</i>	2908	46375	6.27	3.56
<i>worrying</i>	3334	5555	60.02	4.78	<i>globe</i>	2663	11263	23.64	5.47
<i>cared</i>	2904	8099	35.86	4.03	<i>waist</i>	2044	8676	23.56	5.47
<i>complain</i>	2702	8040	33.61	3.94	<i>stick</i>	1806	26197	6.89	3.69
<i>cares</i>	2663	6775	39.31	4.17	<i>wrap</i>	1668	10002	16.68	4.97
<i>doubts</i>	2490	7316	34.03	3.96	<i>hanging</i>	1616	21578	7.49	3.81
<i>complained</i>	2326	9854	23.60	3.43	<i>gathered</i>	1548	19184	8.07	3.92
<i>worries</i>	2196	8171	26.88	3.62	<i>circle</i>	1513	25001	6.05	3.51
<i>complaints</i>	2134	12025	17.75	3.02	<i>shoulders</i>	1498	25126	5.96	3.48
<i>complaining</i>	2032	5659	35.91	4.04	<i>edges</i>	1364	11618	11.74	4.46
<i>passionate</i>	1762	6658	26.46	3.60	<i>hang</i>	1292	20013	6.46	3.60



<i>assumptions</i>	1741	8282	21.02	3.26	<i>clock</i>	1124	15760	7.13	3.74
<i>optimistic</i>	1584	8785	18.03	3.04	<i>glanced</i>	1104	15098	7.31	3.78
<i>lied</i>	1441	6963	20.70	3.24	<i>spun</i>	1101	5481	20.09	5.24
<i>enthusiastic</i>	1396	5482	25.47	3.54	<i>revolves</i>	1038	1172	88.57	7.38
<i>educate</i>	1189	5886	20.20	3.21	<i>circles</i>	808	11097	7.28	3.77
<i>knowledgeable</i>	940	3441	27.32	3.64	<i>centred</i>	800	6056	13.21	4.63
<i>scepticism</i>	743	4035	18.41	3.07	<i>scattered</i>	791	10125	7.81	3.87
<i>fuss</i>	610	2677	22.79	3.38	<i>floating</i>	777	9578	8.11	3.93
<i>joked</i>	583	2959	19.70	3.17	<i>revolved</i>	772	886	87.13	7.35
<i>brag</i>	576	1140	50.53	4.53	<i>revolve</i>	769	899	85.54	7.33
<i>educating</i>	564	3105	18.16	3.05	<i>wraps</i>	748	2838	26.36	5.63
<i>inquire</i>	555	1533	36.20	4.05	<i>wrapping</i>	714	3364	21.22	5.32
<i>qualms</i>	530	845	62.72	4.84	<i>swung</i>	705	7295	9.66	4.18
<i>ambivalent</i>	503	1748	28.78	3.72	<i>wandering</i>	701	4555	15.39	4.85
<i>misconceptions</i>	479	1374	34.86	3.99	<i>bend</i>	694	10025	6.92	3.70
<i>inquired</i>	423	1618	26.14	3.58	<i>perimeter</i>	682	4254	16.03	4.91
<i>adamant</i>	423	1657	25.53	3.54	<i>orbit</i>	658	7911	8.32	3.96
<i>bragging</i>	417	1340	31.12	3.83	<i>gather</i>	583	13314	4.38	3.04
<i>complains</i>	417	1957	21.31	3.28	<i>swirling</i>	554	3052	18.15	5.09
<i>bragged</i>	411	881	46.65	4.41	<i>tightly</i>	528	9079	5.82	3.45
<i>pessimistic</i>	392	1907	20.56	3.23	<i>halfway</i>	518	9813	5.28	3.31
<i>illusions</i>	384	1939	19.80	3.18	<i>ankles</i>	486	3665	13.26	4.64
<i>ambivalence</i>	374	1912	19.56	3.16	<i>fooling</i>	474	1292	36.69	6.11
<i>misgivings</i>	360	1008	35.71	4.03	<i>rope</i>	470	9580	4.91	3.20
<i>fantasised</i>	299	541	55.27	4.66	<i>twisted</i>	455	8736	5.21	3.29
<i>apprehensive</i>	290	1049	27.65	3.66	<i>influential</i>	442	9020	4.90	3.20
<i>fantasise</i>	284	492	57.72	4.72	<i>swirled</i>	433	1647	26.29	5.62
<i>inferences</i>	280	1304	21.47	3.29	<i>curled</i>	431	4989	8.64	4.02

---

<i>raved</i>	258	443	58.24	4.73	<i>clustered</i>	420	2027	20.72	5.28
<i>ado</i>	251	535	46.92	4.42	<i>scarf</i>	413	4020	10.27	4.27

The table shows that the typical first 50 collocates of *about* and *around* are in varying proportions with adverbs, adjectives, pronouns, prepositions, and nouns. The MI score reveals the collocational strength of the two words, and the collocates with higher the MI score, a stronger link exists between the two items. The MI scores were closer to 0. It is more likely that the two items co-occur by chance. Hunston (2002: 71) proposed that an MI score of 3 or higher be taken as evidence that two items are collocates. According to Hunston (2002: 72), collocational strength is not always reliable in identifying meaningful collocations. We also need to know the amount of evidence available for collocations. Collocations with high MI scores include low-frequency words, whereas those with high t-scores tend to show high-frequency pairs. Church, Hanks and Moon (1994) suggest that intersecting the two measures and looking at pairs with high scores in both measures reveals collocability.

### Wordnet-3.1

It is an online lexical resource that enables a search for semantically related words and compares the meanings of both verbs with the meanings.

Based on the criteria used in the study, the results of the study are discussed in terms of meanings, degree of formality, collocation and grammatical structures.

*about*:

Adjective

- **S:** (adj) *about*, astir (on the move) "*up and about*"; "*the whole town was astir over the incident*"

## Adverb

- (55)S: (adv) approximately, *about*, close to, just about, some, roughly, *less*, *around*, or so ((of quantities) imprecise but fairly close to correct) "*lasted approximately an hour*"; "*in just about a minute*"; "*he is about 30 years old*"; "*I have had about all I can stand*"; "*we meet about once a month*"; "*some forty people came*"; "*weighs around a hundred pounds*"; "*roughly \$3,000*"; "*holds 3 gallons, more or less*"; "*20 or so people were at the party*"
- (10)S: (adv) *about*, around (all around or on all sides) "*dirty clothes lying around (or about)*"; "*let us look about for help*"; "*Trees were growing all around*"; "*she looked around her*"
- (5)S: (adv) *about*, around (in the area or vicinity) "*a few spectators standing about*"; "*hanging around*"; "*waited around for the next flight.*"
- (3)S: (adv) *about*, around (used of movement to or among many different places or in no particular direction) "*wandering about with no place to go*"; "*people were rushing about*"; "*news gets around (or about)*"; "*travelled around in Asia*"; "*he needs advice from someone who has been around*"; "*she sleeps around*"
- (3)S: (adv) *about*, around (in or to a reversed position or direction) "*about face*"; "*suddenly she turned around*"
- (2)S: (adv) *about* (in rotation or succession) "*turn about is fair play*"
- (1)S: (adv) *about*, almost, most, nearly, near, nigh, virtually, well-nigh ((of actions or states) slightly short of or not quite accomplished; all but) "*the job is (just) about done*"; "*the baby was almost asleep when the alarm sounded*"; "*we're almost finished*"; "*the car all but ran her down*"; "*he nearly fainted*"; "*talked for nigh onto 2 hours*"; "*the recording*"

*is well-nigh perfect"; "virtually all the parties signed the contract"; "I was near exhausted by the run"; "most everyone agrees"*

- The above information for the word *about* shows the frequency, mostly used as an adjective and an adverb. One very striking difference is that '*about*' when used as an adjective, is least frequent. The frequency varies according to the contextual meanings such as, *to, just about, some, roughly, more or less, around or so*. In terms of frequency, *about* occurs 55 times which is highest among all the meanings. The second-highest rank is '*all around*', which carries a frequency of 10. Whereas the rest of the meanings like '*in area or vicinity, 'used of movement, 'to reversed position, 'in a rotation' and almost, most nearly, near, nigh, virtually, well nigh* carry the frequency 5, 3, 3, 2, 1, 1 respectively.

*around:*

Adverb

- 26 S: (adv) about, around (in the area or vicinity) "*a few spectators standing about*"; "*hanging around*"; "*waited around for the next flight.*"
- 13 S: (adv) *around* (by a circular or circuitous route) "*He came all the way around the base*"; "*the road goes around the pond.*"
- 12 S: (adv) about, around (used of movement to or among many different places or in no particular direction) "*wandering about with no place to go*"; "*people were rushing about*"; "*news gets around (or about)*"; "*travelled around in Asia*"; "*he needs advice from someone who has been around*"; "*she sleeps around.*"
- 6 S: (adv) *around* (in a circle or circular motion) "*The wheels are spinning around.*"

- 2 S: (adv) approximately, about, close to, turn *about* , some, roughly, more or less, around, or so ((of quantities) imprecise but fairly close to correct) "*lasted approximately an hour*"; "*in just about a minute*"; "*he is about 30 years old*"; "*I have had about all I can stand*"; "*we meet about once a month*"; "*some forty people came*"; "*weighs around a hundred pounds*"; "*roughly \$3,000*"; "*holds 3 gallons, more or less*"; "*20 or so people were at the party*"
- 1 S: (adv) about, around (in or to a reversed position or direction) "*about face*"; "*suddenly she turned around.*"
- 1 S: (adv) around (to a particular destination either specified or understood) "*she came around to see me*"; "*I invited them around for supper*"
- 1 S: (adv) about, around (all around or on all sides) "*dirty clothes lying around (or about)*"; "*let's look about for help*"; "*There were trees growing all around*"; "*she looked around her*"
- 1 S: (adv) around (in circumference) "*the trunk is ten feet around*"; "*the pond is two miles around*"
- S: (adv) round, around (from beginning to end; throughout) "*It rains all year round on Skye*"; "*frigid weather the year around*"

The data extracted from WordNet-3.1 shows the frequency with the sentences in context. The word 'around' comes with multiple meanings when used in different contexts. The most frequent meaning is 'in the area or vicinity', and it is used 26 times in terms of frequency. The second meanings that are frequent (13, 12) in terms of meanings are 'by a circular or circuitous route' and 'used of movement to or among many different places or in no particular direction'. The frequency of the meaning comes as 6 which are 'in a circular' or 'circular motion' and this is four times less than *in the area or vicinity*. The rest of the meanings are a reversed position, a particular destination, all around and from beginning to end are counted in terms of frequency (1, 1, 1, 1) respectively. Some notable instances of

Key Words in Contexts (KWIC) and their associations are as follows:

4 x 4 pressure-treated lumber , as we did   add	about	8 inches to the court 's width and length . # Drive
just describe what this issue of the public plan is all	about	: And to do so , I 've got to describe how
Lives ) : Yes . KATHIE-LEE-GIFFORD# The first one was all	about	you : HODA-KOTB# Enough of that . Nagging .
vote on the articles . That 's what Byrd is all	about	: And I hope it fails . DRUDGE : Well , it
, leaving her tired and sluggish . The dream was always	about	fire : Abby hated fire . Fire , and murder , had
request . ALEX CHADWICK : I guess what is most amazing	about	your stories is that you had the idea to go try to
president resigning , sanctions from an accrediting agency and	about	300 layoffs accounting for almost 9 percent of its employees .
At that time , none of us in Syria knew anything	about	civil defense , or how this work is done . So we
. I mean , you 're gon na find out anyway	about	the cocaine , so I wanted to feel you out on the
farmers in these parts , Chi says . Now there are	about	a hundred , and that decline matches the lost of precipitation
" Happy ones ? Are you sure ? And they are	about	Robin and you ! ' ? " She rapid-fires these questions at
when gross domestic product shrank by about 25 percent   are	about	6 percent , Barro said . # CEO of PPG earns nearly
sprawling country estate , there was nothing stiffor arrogant	about	him : He never tried to screw the poor . No one
Don Garland that " Why ? " needs to be asked	about	any new weapon-especially when the U.S. military already
we turn to just some of the many questions being asked	about	safety , security , and helping children cope in the wake of
VOCs ) migrating from twenty-eight percent of the sites. 51 At	about	seventy-five percent of these sites , there was groundwater
Department spending bill generally kept its programs at	about	the same funding levels as the previous year . The bill met
. # The national average for self-serve regular stood at	about	\$2.65 on Sept. 8 , down from about \$2.87 , according to

Selected concordance lines showing adjective choices for *about*

him against reinjury . The truth is , although no one	around	the club wants to talk about it above a whisper , there
patterns , strategies of diplomacy , and government centered	around	the community is strong kinship structure and settlement
. She glimpses him in his side mirror as he disappears	around	the corner into traffic . Shutting her eyes , Drew drops onto
# " There is an incredible burst of movement and growth	around	the country and a whole new generation of people in the private
how I feel , there are a lot of good-meaning people	around	the country that feel that way . But that kind of political
government aircraft to fly themselves and their wives	around	the country to service academy football games . And there 's
decorating business in Little Rock as she has added clients	around	the country   But clearly she has not cashed in on her
ground in his father 's compound , and these were placed	around	the family is home . Visitors started commissioning the
and think " aha . " Seeing Edwards dip and dart	around	the field   return kickoffs , and even juke a 290-pound lineman
popped up in Kronstadt when Vasily , the sailor showing us	around	the former Soviet training vessel Perekop , disclosed that he
fountain in the center surrounded by white flagstones . All	around	the fountain there were enormous pottery urns filled with new
a century is another . # by international agreement , industry	around	the globe is preparing to stop using the last refrigerants that
Mike pulls a string from his pocket . He loops it	around	the grate   STORYTELLER 3 : He shimmies down into the dark
, the Suez Canal , and the Red Sea , and	around	the Horn of Africa to Mombasa , Kenya . There they boarded
He came up to her and led her in a waltz	around	the kitchen   holding the teeth high above their heads ;
in the clutch . # " I would n't expect people	around	the league to think this is a tough team , " Bowie
to pipelines that would connect them to third-party markets	around	the Mediterranean   in northern Europe , and in East Asia .
criminal element . The types of person who are hanging out	around	the motel where Mary 's was assaulted was tragic . The

Selected concordance lines showing adjective choices for *around*

As we can see, *about* is typically followed by manner adverbs, time adverbs and sentence adverbs, whereas *around* nearly typically occurs in the construction adj + *around*+ article + noun. There is thus a qualitative as well as a quantitative difference between *about* and *around*

## CONCLUSIONS

The study examined the relationship between two synonyms 'about' and 'around' as prepositions, adverbs and adjectives. Web-based corpus COCA, BNC, Compleat Lexical Tutor and WordNet - 3.1, and four online dictionaries were considered for analysis to get desired results. The differences found between *about* and *around* are: *about* is much more frequent than *around* and is therefore likely to be less specialised than the latter; *about* occurs more in spoken news than in books of personal styles of writing, whereas *around* is a preferred word in the fiction genre and academic journals. Neither of them is used much in the academic language; their collocations distinguish the two words sharply, *about* is characteristically followed by pronouns, adjectives, nouns, articles and *around* is followed by the article(the) and seems apt for phrasal verbs and preceded by adjectives. In language teaching, corpus helps investigate the multiple meanings necessary for both second language and first language learners. Wordnet 3.1 offers detailed understanding of the levels of meanings for 'about' and 'around' in terms of contextual positions they hold. It is commonly found that 'about' and 'around' are closely associated with their functions. Multiple meanings cannot be elucidated without the help of each other. It is proved that *around* is used to explain the meanings of *about*, in the same way *about* is used to explain *around*. In many aspects, these synonyms hold near meanings and assume the positions of adjectives, adverbs and prepositions.

## References

- Allen, R.E. (ed.). (1990). *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the English Language*. 8th ed. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Atkins, B.T.S., & Levin, B. (1995). Building on a corpus: A linguistic and lexicographical look at some near-synonyms. *International Journal of Lexicography* 8 (2): 85–114.
- Biber, D., Conrad, S., & Reppen, R. (1998). *Corpus linguistics: Investigating language structure and use*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Chrysanne, D., Graeme, H., & Manfred, S. (1993). *The semantic and stylistic differentiation of synonyms and near-synonyms*. AAAI Spring Symposium on Building Lexicons for Machine Translation, 114–121.
- Church, K.W., Gale, W., Hanks, P., & Hindle, D. (1991). Using statistics in lexical analysis. In U. Zernik (ed.). *Lexical acquisition: Exploiting online resources to build a lexicon*, 115–164. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

- Church, K.W., Gale, W., Hanks, P., Hindle, D., & Moon, R. (1994). Lexical substitutability. In B.T.S. Atkins and A. Zampolli (eds.). *Computational approaches to the lexicon*, pp.153–177. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press
- Cobuild on CD-ROM. (1995). Glasgow: Harper Collins Publ.
- Collins Cobuild E-Dict. (1998). Glasgow: Harper Collins Publ.
- Collins English Dictionary and Thesaurus. (1993). Glasgow: Harper Collins Publ.
- Collins Online Dictionary and Cambridge online dictionary, COD (2016)
- Collinson, W. E. (1939). Comparative synonyms: Some principles and illustrations. *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 38 (1), pp. 54-77.
- Divjak, D. (2006). Ways of intending: A corpus-based cognitive linguistic approach to near-synonyms in Russian. In St. Th. Gries, & A. Stefanowitsch (Eds.), *Corpora in Cognitive Linguistics: Corpus-based approaches to syntax and lexis*. pp. 19–56. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter
- Gilquin, G. (2003). Causative ‘get’ and ‘have’: So close, so different. *Journal of English Linguistics*, 31(2), 125-148. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0075424203031002002>
- Glynn, D. (2007). *Mapping meaning. Towards a usage-based methodology in Cognitive Semantics*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Leuven, Leuven, Belgium.
- Glynn, D. (2010). Synonymy, Fields, and Frames. Developing usage-based methodology for Cognitive Semantics. *Cognitive Foundations of Linguistic Usage Patterns*, H.J. Schmid & S. Handl (eds). pp. 89-118. Berlin: Mouton
- Glynn, D. (2014). Polysemy and synonymy: Cognitive theory and corpus method. In *Corpus Methods for Semantics. Quantitative Studies in Polysemy and Synonymy*, edited by Dylan Glynn and Justyna A. Robinson, 7–38. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. DOI: 10.1075/hcp.43.01gly.
- Gries, S. Th. (2001). A corpus linguistic analysis of English -ic vs -ical adjectives. *ICAME Journal*, 25, pp. 65–108.
- Gries, S. Th., & Otani, N. (2010). Behavioural profiles: A corpus-based perspective on synonymy and antonymy. *ICAME Journal*, 34, 121-150.
- Hanks, P. (1996). Contextual dependency and lexical sets. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* 1 (1): 75–98.
- Harley, H. (2006). *English words: A linguistic introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hornby, A.S. (2015). *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. Oxford: England, Oxford University Press(9th ed)
- Hu, C.Y., & Yang, B. (2015). Using sketch engine to investigate synonymous verbs. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, Vol. 5, No.4 pp. 29-41
- Hunston, S. (2002). *Corpora in Applied Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



- Jackson, H., & Amvela, Z. E. (2004). *Words, Meaning, and Vocabulary*. London: Continuum
- Jackson, H., & E. Ze Amvela, Z.E. (2000). *Words, Meaning and Vocabulary: An Introduction to Modern English Lexicology*. London and New York: Cassell.
- LDOCE = Summers, Della (ed.). 1995. *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*. 3rd ed. Harlow, Essex: Longman.
- Liu, D. (2010). Is it chief, main, major, primary, or principal concern? A corpus-based behavioural profile study of the near-synonyms. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 15, 56- 87.
- Liu, D., & Espino, M. (2012). Actually, Genuinely, Really, and Truly: A corpus-based Behavioral Profile study of near-synonymous adverbs. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 17(2), 198-228. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1075/ijcl.17.2.03liu>
- Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (Fifth edition). (2009). Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- Miller, G. A., & Charles, W.G. (1991). Contextual correlates of semantic similarity. *Language and Cognitive Processes* 6 (1): 1–28.
- Oxford Dictionary Online. (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com>
- Oxford English Dictionary on CD-ROM. (1994). Version 1.15, 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Partington, A. (1998). *Patterns and meanings: Using corpora for English language research and teaching*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Paul, P. (ed.). 1995. *Cambridge International Dictionary of English*. Cambridge University Press.
- Pearsall, J(ed.). (1998). *The New Oxford Dictionary of English*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Peirsman, Y., Geeraerts, D., & Speelman, D. (2015). The corpus-based identification of cross-lectal synonyms in pluricentric languages. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 20(1), 54-80. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1075/ijcl.20.1.03pei>
- Sinclair, J. (2001). *Collins COBUILD English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*. 3rd ed. Glasgow: HarperCollins.
- Xiao, R., & McEnery, T. (2006). Collocation, semantic prosody, and near synonymy: A cross-linguistic perspective. *Applied Linguistics*, 27(1), 103-129.
- Yeh, Y., Liou, H., & LI, Y. (2007). Online synonym materials and concordancing for EFL college writing. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 20(2), 131-152
- [www.thesaurus.com](http://www.thesaurus.com)
- [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)