

aNear-Synonymy Analysis of Three Adverbials: Surprisingly, Astonishingly and Amazingly

Üç Zarfın Yakın Eş anlamlılık Analizi: Surprisingly, Astonishingly ve Amazingly

Cemre İŞLER¹

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Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, tek kelimelik zarflar (surprisingly, astonishingly ve amazingly) arasındaki benzerlik ve farklılıkların anlam, kesit ve eşdizimsel kısıtlamalar açısından ne ölçüde olduğunu araştırmaktır. Anlamları bakımından benzerliklerin boyutunu göstermek için üç standart İngilizce sözlük kullanılmıştır. Farklılıkların anlam bakımından boyutlarının incelenmesine gelince, iki farklı eş anlamlılar sözlüğü kullanılmıştır. Ayrıca, Çağdaş Amerikan İngilizcesi Derlemi (COCA), bu kelimeler arasındaki anlam, kesit ve eşdizimsel kısıtlamalar açısından farklılıkların daha iyi anlaşılmasını sağlamak için analiz edilmiş ve bulgulara ilişkin örnekler sunulmasında kullanılmıştır. Sonuçlara göre, bu kelimeler sözlüklerde anlamca birbirinin yerine geçebilecek şekilde birbirinin eş anlamlısı olarak verile de aslında tam olarak birbirinin yerine geçememiş ve detayda anlamları farklılık göstermiştir. Bu yüzden bu üç kelime yakın eş anlamlı olarak kabul edilmelidir. Ayrıca bulgular, bu üç kelimenin oluşum sıklığı ve kesitler arasında kullanım sıklığı açısından birbirinden büyük ölçüde farklılık gösterdiğini ortaya koymuştur. Son olarak, bulgular, bu üç kelimenin çoğunlukla sonlamalı niteleyen olarak "enough" ile yan yana geldiğini göstermiş olup, bununla birlikte, yalnızca "surprisingly" zarfının ön-niteleyen olarak "not" ile birlikte kullanıldığını ortaya çıkarmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler Yakın eş anlamlılık, Zarf, Surprisingly, Astonishingly, Amazingly, COCA

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the extent of the similarities and differences among one-word adverbials (surprisingly, astonishingly, amazingly) in terms of meaning, register and collocational constraints. These adverbials are considered roughly synonymous of one another. But we should be skeptical about their full synonymy, though their dictionary meanings show that these words can be substitutable with one another. In order to demonstrate the extent of the similarities in

¹ Responsible Author: Asst. Prof. Dr., Firat University, Elazığ, cisler@firat.edu.tr, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-3622-0756



terms of their meanings, three standard dictionaries of English were used. As for the extent of the differences in terms of their meanings, two dictionaries of synonymy discriminations were used. Also, the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) was analyzed to provide further understanding to the differences among these words in terms of meaning, register and collocational constraints. According to the findings, though these words were given as interchangeable in meaning and considered synonyms of one another, they were actually not completely substitutable with one another. Rather, they differ in their shades of meanings. That is why these three words should be considered as near-synonyms. Also, the findings revealed that these three words differed from one another in terms of frequency of occurrences and the frequency of use across registers to a great extent. Finally, the findings showed that these three words mostly collocate with enough as post-modifier. However, only surprisingly collocate with not as pre-modifier.

Keywords Near-synonymy, Adverbial, Surprisingly, Astonishingly, Amazingly, COCA

Introduction

Synonymy has been defined in a number of different ways, but generally, it is defined as the similarity of meaning between two or more different lexemes (Stanojević, 2009). A synonym may also be viewed as a same-language equivalent. But, at this point, it is not tantamount to the sameness of meaning since two words cannot be fully identical in meaning (Adamska-Salaciak, 2013). If so, what about absolute synonyms where the meanings are regarded completely identical? Some state that there are no perfect synonyms (Bolinger, 1977; Goodman, 1952), though it may be restricted to mostly technical terms (groundhog, woodchuck) (Hirst, 1995); most believe that they are rare (Stern, 1931). However, some, like Apresjan (2000) claim that exact synonyms are, in fact, quite common. In this sense, Cruse (2000) has set up a scale of synonymity where synonyms can be distinguished as absolute synonyms, cognitive synonyms and near-synonyms. Absolute synonyms, if they exist at all, are generally accepted as rare (Stanojević, 2009). In relation to this, it is explained that lexemes with completely same meaning is not natural for a language since they would take on a new nuance of meaning when substituted for the other in any context (Edmonds & Hirst, 2002). Because absolute synonyms are generally regarded as rare, most semanticists have viewed cognitive synonymy as synonymy, which is the identity of descriptive meaning (Stanojević, 2009). As for the near-synonyms, they are almost synonyms and very similar in meaning, however; not identical. They cannot be completely substitutable with the other since they differ in their shades of denotation, connotation, implicature, emphasis, or register (DiMarco, Hirst & Stede, 1993). At this point, understanding the differences between near-synonyms is important for the lexical choice where the nuances of meaning need to be conveyed in accordance with the context. However, the nuances that differentiate near-synonyms can be subtle and difficult even for native speakers (Edmonds & Hirst, 2002). Importantly, considering those differences is essential when faced with a choice between near-synonyms, because using the wrong word may cause undesired implications (Inkpen & Hirst, 2006). For instance, Uba (2015) showed that we can say *important*, *crucial*, *necessary*,

essential and vital role or factor as evidenced by dictionaries. However, in some instances these adjectives cannot be substitute for one another when used with certain nouns, for example, we can say “*crucial meeting not essential meeting, essential food not crucial food*” as put forward by the British National Corpus (BNC) (pg. 10). In the light of this, it is not clear to what extent they are synonymous and can be interchangeable when used with certain nouns. In a similar vein, Liu (2010) conducted a study where he examined the internal semantic structure of a set of near-synonym adjectives: “*main, chief, principal, and primary*” and revealed the inadequate descriptions and treatments of this set of near-synonyms by the traditional reference materials with regard to the usage patterns and which types of nouns they modify. Similarly, Church et al. (1994) found out similar insufficient detailed information on the usage patterns of the following set of near-synonyms: “*ask for, demand and request*”. Moreover, Tylor (2003) investigated a set of near-synonym adjectives: “*high and tall*” and identified inadequate treatments of these concepts by the traditional reference materials. Consequently, more research is needed on a variety set of synonyms to bring more light and understanding on how a set of synonyms work in terms of meanings and usage and thus help support the correct use of word combinations. In view of the need to shed additional light on the nature of internal semantic structure of near-synonyms, this study investigates the semantic patterns among the three adverbials: surprisingly, astonishingly and amazingly to discover the descriptions and treatments of this set of near-synonyms by the traditional reference materials and corpus-data material.

Lexical Choice and Near-Synonymy

The process of lexical choice has something to do with determining the word that most precisely conveys the denotation and connotation required, and nothing else (Edmonds, 1999). Verbalizing the exact denotation and connotation desired may not be easy due to several reasons. Sometimes, the desired meaning cannot be provided with a suitable word and thus, a phrase has to be constructed; or many similar words can be offered but distinguishing between lexical-near-synonyms will be a problem (Edmonds, 1999). For example, the words foe and enemy both refer to someone who tries to harm another. But foe more stresses military hostilities than enemy does (Gove, 1984). The distinction between lie and misrepresentation lies in the difference that while a lie is an intentional attempt to deceive, a misrepresentation may not be deliberate (Gove, 1984). For further examples see Table 1 (Hirst, 1995) below.

Table 1: Examples of near-synonym variations

Type of variation	Examples
Stylistic, formality	pissed: drunk: inebriated
Stylistic, force	ruin: annihilate
Expressed attitude	skinny: thin: slim
Emotive	daddy: dad: father
Continuousness	seep: drip
Emphasis on different aspects of meaning	enemy: foe



Fuzzy boundary	woods: forest
Collocational	task: job (in the context of daunting)

As seen in Table 1, near-synonyms seem almost like synonyms, but they are not completely inter-substitutable. Actually, they differ in their shades of denotation or connotation, or in the sort of meaning they take on; and also, in their grammatical or collocational constraints. In this regard, "difference" as a concept becomes the main point in the discussion of near-synonyms. If absolute synonyms are not in fact same in meaning, then there must be something that makes them different (Edmonds & Hirst, 2002). For De Saussure (1916), difference is essential to the creation of meaning:

"Within the same language, all words used to express related ideas limit each other reciprocally; synonyms like French redouter 'dread,' craindre 'fear,' and avoir peur 'be afraid' have value only through their opposition: if redouter did not exist, all its content would go to its competitors...The value of just any term is accordingly determined by its environment; it is impossible to fix even the value of the word signifying "sun" without first considering its surroundings: in some languages it is not possible to say "sit in the sun." (p.116).

By their nature, near-synonyms require comparing words and emphasizing the differences in meaning rather than just positive features (Edmonds, 1999). However, as Edmonds & Hirst (2002) claim "it can be difficult even for native speakers of a language to command the differences between near-synonyms well enough to use them with invariable precision, or to articulate those differences even when they are known" (p.108). In this sense, writers often look up the dictionaries when faced with a choice between near-synonyms, because using the wrong word may cause undesired implications (Inkpen & Hirst, 2006). Several dictionaries of synonym discrimination have been published to list clusters of similar words and distinguish the differences between the words in each cluster, including Webster's New Dictionary of Synonyms (Gove, 1984) and English Synonyms and Antonyms (Fernald, 1896). So-called dictionaries of synonyms actually involve near-synonyms. The nuances of meaning presented in these dictionaries are generally indirect when compared to those of standard dictionary definitions (Edmonds & Hirst, 2002).

Distinctions among Near-Synonyms

Near-synonyms can vary due to any aspect of their meaning. DiMarco, Hirst, and Stede (1993) investigated the types of differences recognized in near-synonym discrimination dictionaries. They reported that a small number of types appeared frequently. Accordingly, some of the most relevant types of variations are presented below.

Denotational Variations

Near-synonyms can differ in terms of any concept, or idea they express. However, it is not limited to it. They can also differ in the way the idea is conveyed (e.g., with respect to emphasis, necessity, and/or strength) (Edmonds, 1999). That is to say, a concept is not necessarily expressed explicitly by a word in

every possible context; it can be conveyed implicitly in particular contexts, or emphasized in relation to another concept. So, as Edmonds (1999) states the concept denoted by a word is not, in practice, always “a necessary implication of using that word”(p.33).

Stylistic Variations

Stylistic variations of near-synonyms have the values of formality, concreteness, force, floridity, and familiarity (Hovy, 1990). Generally, the first three of these occur in dictionaries. Formality is the most identified dimension (Edmonds, 1999) and the degree of formality is signaled by the words such as formal, informal, formality, and slang (Inkpen & Hirst, 2006). For example, pass away and die are nearly identical in meaning except for the former’s greater formality. Force is also widely recognized, but it is not generally shown explicitly in dictionaries (Edmonds, 1999). Force can be signaled by words such as emphatic and intensification. Words that signal force can include ruin and destroy. Finally, the degree of concreteness can be marked by words such as abstract, concrete, and concretely. For example, both error and blunder indicates making mistake, but the latter is more concrete.

Attitudinal Variations

Near-synonyms can differ in the speaker’s attitude toward their denotation in a situation (e.g., the person is described as slim, thin or skinny?). The words expressing the speaker’s attitudes can be pejorative, neutral, or favorable. For example, a difficulty can be expressed as an obstacle or a challenge where the speaker’s attitude determines the choice of word. Some examples are shown in Table 2 (Edmonds, 1999).

Table 2: *Examples of expressed attitude*

Pushy	aggressive
Skinny	thin: slim
Ponderous	heavy: weighty
Banger	car
Blunder	error
Blubber	cry: wail
Impute	attribute: credit

Collocational Variations

Near-synonyms can also differ in the way they are used with another word. They include selectional restrictions, lexical collocations, grammatical collocations and idioms. For example, the distinction between task and job is due to the lexical restriction where task can be combined with daunting but job cannot; a daunting task, *a daunting job. However, the distinction between die and pass away is due to selectional restrictions which is determined semantically, not lexically. That is, only pass away can be used for people: *The dogs passed away due to mistreatment. Other examples can be given as in Table 3 (Edmonds, 1999).



Table 3: *Examples of collocational variations*

Selectional restrictions	die: pass away land: perch eat: dine
Lexical collocational	customer: client addled: rancid: rotten task: job w.r.t. daunting
Grammatical collocation	correct: right w.r.t. a/the
Idiom	bite the dust: gnaw the powder
Sub-categorization	give: denote teach: instruct
Converse	like: please buy: sell

The Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the extent of the similarities and differences among one-word near-synonyms (surprisingly, astonishingly, amazingly) in terms of meaning, register and collocational constraints. These three near-synonyms have characteristically been linked to attitude stance adverbials, because they express the speaker's attitude or value judgments or assessments (Biber et. al., 1999). Researchers have studied stance devices under different names such as 'evaluation' (Hunston & Thompson, 2000), 'evidentiality' (Chafe, 1986), and 'stance' (Biber et. al., 1999; Conrad & Biber, 1999; Hyland, 1998). In the present study, Conrad and Biber's (2000) definition is adopted where they define stance adverbials as "grammatical devices used to frame a proposition" (Conrad & Biber, 1999, p.58). They categorize these adverbials according to their meaning (epistemic, attitudinal and style stance), form (single adverbs, adverb phrases, noun phrases, prepositional phrases, finite clauses and non-finite clauses) and position (initial, pre-verbal, post-verbal, and final). In this research, in order to narrow down the scope of study, the attitudinal stance adverbials (surprisingly, astonishingly, amazingly-all single as form) in the sentence initial position were examined. The study was comprised of two phases: (1) a survey of the information provided about the above terms in dictionaries, and (2) the collection and analysis of corpus concordances of the above terms. The following research questions were posed to guide the study:

1. What is the extent of similarities among these three adverbials *surprisingly*, *astonishingly* and *amazingly* in terms of their dictionary meanings?
2. What is the extent of differences among these three adverbials *surprisingly*, *astonishingly* and *amazingly* in terms of their dictionary meanings?

3. What is the frequency of the usage of these three adverbials *surprisingly*, *astonishingly* and *amazingly* across different genres in the corpus?
4. What are the collocational constraints of these three adverbials *surprisingly*, *astonishingly* and *amazingly* across different genres in the corpus and how are they used?

Method

Data Collection

This study is descriptive-qualitative since it carries out thorough description of the data presentation and analysis, and does not regard number or statistics as an entry point of the analysis. As can be understood from the Findings section, the first step was to make an overall analysis of the semantic features of our synonym set *surprisingly*, *amazingly* and *astonishingly*. For this purpose, the extent of similarities and differences of their meanings was analyzed in a cyclical manner until no new discernible meanings are left that can be associated with these adverbials. The extent of the similarities among the three near-synonyms in terms of meaning was investigated by using standard dictionaries of English including Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, The American Heritage Dictionary and Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. The extent of differences was investigated by using dictionaries of synonymy discrimination including Webster's New Dictionary of Synonyms (Gove, 1984) and English Synonyms and Antonyms (Fernald, 1896). The dictionaries, however, do not offer detailed explanation about when and how we should use each adverbial. The second main step of our work is then to understand the usage patterns of the three adverbials. To do so, we need to obtain authentic language use samples produced by native speakers of English. At this point, the analyses of these three adverbials were then carried out based on the examples taken from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA, by Mark Davies, <https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/>). This is the largest corpus of American English with one billion words. COCA contains five different registers: spoken (SPOK), newspapers (NEWS), fiction (FIC), academic (ACAD) and magazines (MAG). The corpus is also equipped with a powerful search engine with many user-friendly search functions. In other words, COCA is preferred for this research due to its contemporary and representative data as well as its capable and user-friendly search functions.

Data Analysis

The raw data from the concordances of each adverbial were identified and counted for the overall frequency patterns and collocational constraints, and then calculated into percentages for a clearer picture of the results. Next, all the data were analyzed and interpreted in a descriptive way in order to respond to the research questions. Finally, the conclusion was summarized based on the findings and discussion.



Results

Definitions of Surprisingly, Astonishingly, Amazingly

One of the purposes of this study is to find out the extent of the similarities and differences among these three adverbials in terms of their meanings. In this regard, the meanings of each adverbial were examined by using a number of dictionaries. Generally, these adverbials appear without definitions in dictionaries. They are rather given as additional boldface words at the end of entries to which they are closely and clearly related in basic meaning. So, the meanings of surprisingly, astonishingly and amazingly are examined through looking up their verb forms. The definitions examined for each are given in Table 4 below one by one:

Table 4: *Definitions of Surprise, Astonish, Amaze*

Verb	Synonym	Meaning	Dictionary
Surprise	Astonish Amaze	To make someone feel surprise.	Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary
		To cause to feel wonder, astonishment, or amazement, as at something unanticipated.	The American Heritage Dictionary
		To make someone feel surprised.	Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English
Astonish	Amaze Surprise	To surprise someone very much.	Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary
		To fill with sudden wonder or amazement. See Synonyms at surprise.	The American Heritage Dictionary
		To surprise someone very much [= amaze]	Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English
Amaze	Surprise Astonish	To cause someone to be extremely surprised	Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary
		To affect with great wonder; astonish. See Synonyms at surprise	The American Heritage Dictionary
		To surprise someone very much [= astonish]	Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English

As shown in the dictionary meanings above, *surprise*, *astonish* and *amaze* were found to be used interchangeably for one another. In other words, each verb was given as the synonym of the other two verbs, which means that, the meaning given for one verb applies to the other words.

Along with these definitions for *surprise*, *astonish* and *amaze*, the extent of similarities in terms of their meanings are aimed to put forward. According to the given meanings, it is shown that they all seem similar and interchangeable with one another. As a summary of the definitions given by the three dictionaries, it can be reported that:

Surprise, astonish, amaze... can mean to make someone feel surprise/to surprise someone / to cause someone to be surprised.

In order to see whether there are differences in terms of meaning among these three words, dictionaries of synonymy discrimination were used (i.e. *Webster's New Dictionary of Synonyms*, Gove, 1984; *English Synonyms and Antonyms*, Fernald, 1896). When each word is examined as a separate entry, it is seen that there is very fine line with regard to meaning among them. In order to show the extent of the differences, the subtle meanings for each word were explained below. Also, the examples from COCA were provided to give further insights into the use of each word.

Firstly, the examinations were conducted by using *English Synonyms and Antonyms* and then, the examples for each explanation was provided from *Webster's New Dictionary of Synonyms*. Accordingly;

- (1) *Surprise* appears midway between *astonishment* and *amazement*, and often “respects matters of lighter consequence or such as are less startling in character” (p.53). <“the morning skies...surprised her daily as if they were uncommon things- Wes”t> (p.804).
- (2) *Amazement* and *astonishment*, they both indicate “the momentary overwhelming of the mind by that which is beyond expectation” (p.53).
- (3) While *amazement* specifically affects the intellect “that he should even speak to her was amazing –but to speak with such civility -Austen>, *astonishment* affects the emotions” (p.53). <“It is the part of men to fear and tremble, when the most mighty gods by tokens send such dreadful heralds to astonish us –Shak.”> (p.804).
- (4) Also, *amazement* can be “either pleasing or painful, as when induced by the grandeur of the mountains, or by the fury of the storm” (p.53). We can use “pleased *surprise*, but scarcely pleased *astonishment*” (p.53). “*Amazement* expresses in it something of *confusion* or *bewilderment*; however; *confusion* and *bewilderment* are not necessarily occur with *amazement*” (p.53).
- (5) *Astonishment* may also occur without “*bewilderment* or *confusion*” (p.53).



Secondly, *Webster's New Dictionary of Synonyms* was used to refer to the discriminations of meanings among these words and then, COCA was analyzed in order to give further examples:

Surprisingly

Surprise can mean to encounter with another suddenly and with startling effect. It can also apply to an unexpected feeling that is likely to awake some degree of surprise, amazement, or wonder; both feelings imply a lack of preparation of what is expected (p.804).

- (1) *"In addition, I was not considered sufficiently mature to impersonate Faidherbe. **Surprisingly**, an American student about twenty years younger than I am was given the role instead"* (COCA: ACAD).

Here, the speaker expresses the reason why he was not taking the role. By doing so, he actually implies the contradiction where the same reason should have been valid for the actor whom the role was given instead of him. Giving the role to a 20-year younger student was an unexpected development for the speaker that caused him to surprise.

- (2) *"However, perhaps the most important intended effect of quizzes is improved exam performance. **Surprisingly**, this topic has received relatively little attention and the evidence is mixed. A few studies have found that quizzes improve exam performance"* (COCA: ACAD).

In this example, it is understood that contrary to what is expected, the topic has not taken the attention that is desired. That's why the situation arouses some degree of surprise. The researcher was not prepared for the consequence which is not anticipated.

- (3) *"However, by the time he'd asked her to make a decision, Rachel had come to realize she was in love with Bruce. **Surprisingly**, miraculously, Bruce loved her, too"* (COCA: FIC).

His asking for a decision was the moment that Rachel suddenly realized she loves Bruce. Bruce's loving her back is not only surprising but also miraculous that fills her with a sudden wonder.

These examples show that the speaker's use of *surprisingly* expresses his/her attitude towards the situation s/he comes upon. Confronting with an unanticipated event is what makes them feel surprised. Therefore, causing an effect through being unexpected creates a degree of surprise here.

Astonishingly

Astonish may imply "a dazing or silencing" or it can mean to "surprise so greatly as to seem incredible" or sometimes solely "unusual" (p.804).

- (1) *"On the surface, people seem calm, perhaps in shock, but hazards are everywhere. Fires are proving the most immediate. This was one of ninety caused by gas explosions, fueled by dry debris and whipped up by icy winds. **Astonishingly**, for this sophisticated nation, we didn't*

see a single fireman equipped with breathing apparatus. The men were left with just the protection of fireproof garb. It's also hard to fathom why here in one of the most developed parts of the world firemen are slowed down because the water supply has been cut off, and they have to pump up supplies from the rivers below” (COCA: SPOK).

In this example, by expressing great surprise, the speaker implies that it is astonishing for such a sophisticated nation not to equip firemen with breathing apparatus.

- (2) *“Red cells drawn from volunteers were placed in a solution with low salt content, which normally would cause them to rupture. The volunteers were told to try to mentally "protect" their own distant blood cells from harm. **Astonishingly**, measurements made with a computer-linked spectrophotometer revealed that nearly a third of the participants had succeeded, seemingly, in mentally slowing their blood cells' destruction” (COCA: MAG).*

Here, the speaker expresses his/her great surprise that measurements revealed nearly a third of the participants had succeeded, which seems incredible.

- (3) *“The Raymonds started accumulating vacation time and socking away enough cash for a three-month ski trip to the Canadian and American West two seasons ago. **Astonishingly**, they managed to travel at an average cost of US\$90 per day, even less than they had originally planned” (COCA: MAG).*

It is astonishing for the speaker that the Raymonds managed to travel at an average cost of US\$90 per day, which seems unusual.

These examples demonstrate that the speakers' expressing their astonishments can imply a great surprise to a situation that seems incredible or unusual.

Amazingly

Amaze, although it has an implication of astonishment, emphasizes “rather bewilderment, perplexity, or wonder” (p.804).

- (1) *“It is hard to imagine a clearer, simpler demonstration of how important thermal sensilla are to the insects' feeding routine. Odors from a potential host initially attract vinchucas, but heat is the only stimulus both necessary and sufficient to get them to bite. A current of warm air has now reached the insect's sweeping antennae. As the thermal sensilla absorb the heat, they warm up. Vinchucas, like most animals, can detect heat through conduction or through rising air currents. **Amazingly**, though, the insects can also sense radiant heat-known as infrared radiation” (COCA: MAG).*

Here, the insects' ability to sense radiant heat-known as infrared radiation amazes the speaker with wonder.

- (2) *“To participate, the Bookfest Club members had to consistently read an average of 10 pages per day, a goal easily achievable by most. During their weekly library class, I used a simple*



*chart to track their progress. **Amazingly**, student participation almost doubled -- and far fewer students dropped out" (COCA: ACAD).*

In this example, the speaker filled with wonder when s/he saw that student participation almost doubled as well as far fewer students dropped out.

(3) *"I want the helmet to cover my face. " As I watched his expression turn into tears, I pulled a fiery red bicycle helmet off the shelf. " Look at this one! " I exclaimed. " It looks just like Ben's! " Ben is his teenage cousin, whom he worships. **Amazingly**, my strategy worked. // " I'll get a red helmet like Ben's! " Kenneth said, his eyes lighting up as he grabbed it out of my hands" (COCA: NEWS).*

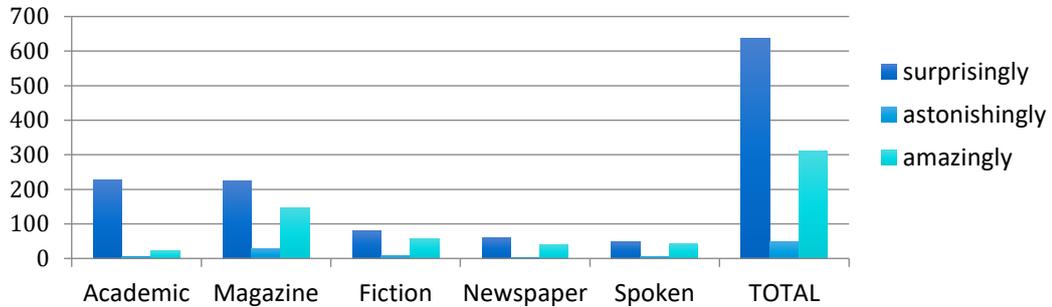
Lastly, in this example, it is bewildering for the speaker that his/her strategy worked.

As can be seen in the examples, *amazingly* implies the speaker's attitude toward what s/he perceives as wondering or bewildering.

All in all, when the extent of the similarities and differences among these three words in terms of their meanings were investigated, it was shown that the standard dictionaries of English define each of the words as synonyms of one another. They all refer to each word as having the meaning of -to make someone feel surprised. However, when dictionaries of synonymy discrimination was examined, it was demonstrated that these words are not completely identical in their meaning, which means, their meanings differ from what is earlier provided as -making someone feel surprised. So, though these words were given as interchangeable in meaning and considered synonyms of one another, they were actually not completely substitutable with one another. Rather, they differ in their shades of meanings. That's is why they should not be considered full synonyms but near-synonyms. Apart from the difference in their meaning, near-synonyms are also reported to differ in their register and collocational constraints (see theoretical framework part). So, in the rest of the current study, the variations across registers and collocational constraints were dealt with.

Variations across registers

Table 5: Distributions across registers



Overall, the findings of the study revealed that these three adverbials differed from one another in terms of frequency of occurrences to a great extent (see Table 5). With 638 instances, *surprisingly* outnumbered the other two adverbials regarding the frequency of use. Then, *amazingly* was found to occur 311 times in the corpus. Lastly, *astonishingly* ranked the third with a total of 47 occurrences.

In terms of frequency of three adverbials across registers, the findings showed that there was a great variation among them. Accordingly, these adverbials were found to be used in the register of Magazine mostly. To have a deep insight into the variation, it is worth documenting the results obtained from the analysis of these three adverbials. Firstly, the analysis of adverbial *surprisingly* demonstrated that Academic register includes the high numbers of instances with 228 token. The register of Magazine followed Academic with 223 instances. In comparison to these two registers, the rest showed quite low frequencies. Among them, Fiction and Newspaper had 79 and 60 instances respectively. Spoken register was found to include the lowest numbers with 48 instances. Secondly, the analysis of adverbial *astonishingly* indicated that Magazine register ranked the first with 28 occurrences. Among the rest of the registers, Fiction was found to have 8 instances and Spoken with 5 instances followed by Academic with 4 instances. Newspaper, on the other hand, was found to have the lowest frequency of use compared to others in terms of the register differences of *astonishingly*. Thirdly and lastly, the analysis of adverbial *amazingly* showed that as in the analysis of *astonishingly*, Magazine register was found to have the highest frequency of use across registers with 147 token. Spoken ranked the second with 44 instances followed by newspaper with 40 instances. Academic was found to have the lowest frequency of use among the registers with 22 instances.



Collocational Variations

Table 6: Frequency of collocational constraints

Surprisingly		Astonishingly		Amazingly	
Colloc.	Freq.	Colloc.	Freq.	Colloc.	Freq.
Enough	11	Enough	3	Enough	15
Not	1370	-	-	-	-

To find out what words are mostly combined with these three adverbials, collocational analysis was carried out (see Table 6). Overall findings of this analysis demonstrated that all of these adverbials mostly collocated with *enough* as a post modifier. However, each of them differed with respect to frequency of use. *Amazingly* has the highest numbers of *enough* with 15 instances as a post modifier as illustrated in the Table 6. Here, some examples are provided from COCA:

- (1) "I covered with my hands over my head - like that could help. **Amazingly enough**, not a single bullet reached me" (COCA: FIC).
- (2) "But with simple diet and lifestyle changes, their arteries began to open up again, and their chest pain melted away. **Amazingly enough**, poor circulation may also be a key contributor to back pain" (COCA: MAG).
- (3) "Students feel confident enough to speak openly about issues. **Amazingly enough**, however, something about this conscious nonaggression forces the student to internal self-reflection without being judged by the teacher" (COCA: ACAD).

Considering the adverbial *surprisingly*, it has 11 instances of *enough* as a post modifier as indicated in the Table above. Some examples extracted from COCA are given as:

- (1) "It might also be having an effect on what the government does. **Surprisingly enough**, even official sources within China have gone far to recognize the challenges the country faces and its responsibility to deal with them" (COCA: MAG).
- (2) "It would be no more than responsible stewardship to turn this yearly expense into a cash cow. **Surprisingly enough**, it was student protest that killed the idea" (COCA: FIC).
- (3) "His formerly nagging and ambitious wife -- previously always aligned with the inauthentic by the narrative -- is transformed by their traumatic separation. **Surprisingly enough**, she changes radically and refuses, for the first time, her father's advice and pressure, making moves toward a new life as an independent woman eager to study (she goes to the university) and with her own place in society as a professional" (COCA: ACAD).

Lastly, *astonishingly* was found to have the lowest frequency for *enough* with 3 instances as a post modifier as shown in the Table. Here, some examples from COCA are given:

- (1) “*The 2007 New York Croquet Club banquet celebrated the organization's 40th anniversary, which happened to coincide with the 30th anniversary of the founding of the national croquet association. **Astonishingly enough**, I found no significant factual discrepancies between Johnny Osborn's account of his performance and those of others attending, including the Kid and the man who had cursed Johnny*” (COCA: NEWS).
- (2) “*Chuck Mitford, former marine sergeant, took charge of the mixed group, which included sullen, pugnacious Turs, spiderlike Deski, hairy Rugarians, vague Ilginish, and gaunt Morphins, with Humans in the majority. **Astonishingly enough**, there was one Catteni, Emassi Zainal, who had been shanghaied onto the prison ship*” (COCA: FIC).
- (3) “*But, if such evidence exists, no one has bothered to present it. **Astonishingly enough**, the principal witnesses against Mary Ellen Pleasant are a mentally disturbed White woman and a brilliant Black reporter, both of whom were engaged in a conspiracy to destroy Mary Ellen Pleasant and defame her memory*” (COCA: MAG).

Furthermore, when these three adverbials were compared with one another in terms of collocational distinctions, it was found that *not* was only collocated with *surprisingly* as a pre-modifier. The number of instances was 1370 for the use of *not* as a collocation of *surprisingly*. Some of the examples from COCA are reported here:

- (1) “*Miriam was a vampire hunter. **Not surprisingly**, she disapproved of her son's choice of a girlfriend, and initially had vowed to dispatch Jane at the earliest convenience*” (COCA: FIC).
- (2) “*Since our most recent recession, with so many companies downsizing or barely holding on, the thought of asking for a promotion has taken a back seat to praying your paycheck keeps coming. **Not surprisingly**, many companies have stopped providing raises, or have dropped to very minimal cost-of-living increases while ignoring issues of merit or performance*” (COCA: NEWS).
- (3) “*Among the demographic factors, there were no correlations for age with height or weight. **Not surprisingly**, there was a significant correlation between height and weight ($r = .459$, $p < .01$)*” (COCA: ACAD).

Therefore, while *surprisingly* was found to be collocated with *not*, neither *amazingly* nor *astonishingly* was found to be combined with *not* as pre-modifier.

Discussion

The primary aim of this study was to investigate the extent of the similarities and differences among one-word adverbials (*surprisingly*, *astonishingly*, *amazingly*) in terms of meaning, register and



collocational constraints. These adverbials are viewed roughly synonymous of one another. However, we should be skeptical about their full synonymy though their dictionary meanings show that they all imply -making someone feel surprised. In order to demonstrate the extent of the similarities in terms of their meanings, three standard dictionaries of English were used. According to the given meanings of each word, it was found that they are used interchangeably for one another. In other words, each is given as the synonym of the other two, which means that, the meaning given for one can be applied to other two. However, when these words were examined in dictionaries of synonymy discrimination and COCA, it was found that these words are not completely identical in their meaning, which means, their meanings differ from what is earlier provided as -making someone feel surprised. With regard to the differences among their meanings, it was reported that *surprise* appears midway between *astonishment* and *amazement*, and usually "respects matters of lighter consequence or such as are less startling in character" (Fernald, 1896, p.53). As for *amazement* and *astonishment*, they both indicate "the momentary overwhelming of the mind by that which is beyond expectation" (p.53). While *amazement* specifically affects the intellect, *astonishment* affects the emotions (p.53). Also, *amazement* can be "either pleasing or painful" (p.53). *Amazement* expresses in it something of *confusion* or *bewilderment*; however; *confusion* and *bewilderment* are not necessarily occur with *amazement* (p.53). *Astonishment* may also occur without *bewilderment* or *confusion* (p.53). By explaining and giving examples for the different meanings of each word, it was shown that these so called synonyms are actually near-synonyms; that is, they cannot be completely substitutable with the other. After investigating the extent of similarities and differences in terms of their meanings, the frequency of occurrences and distributions across registers were examined. Accordingly, the findings revealed that these three near-synonyms differed from one another in terms of frequency of occurrences to a great extent. With 638 instances, *surprisingly* outnumbered the other two adverbials regarding the frequency of use. Then, *amazingly* was found to occur 311 times in the corpus. Lastly, *astonishingly* ranked the third with a total of 47 occurrences. As for the variations across registers, the findings showed that these near-synonyms are mostly used in the register of Magazine, yet there was a great variation among them in terms of the other registers. Firstly, the frequency analysis of *surprisingly* across registers showed that the register of Magazine followed Academic. In comparison to these two registers, the rest showed quite low frequencies. Secondly, the frequency analysis of *astonishingly* across registers indicated that Magazine register ranked the first. Among the rest of the registers, Academic followed Fiction and Spoken. Newspaper, on the other hand, was found to have the lowest frequency of use compared to others. Thirdly and lastly, the frequency analysis of adverbial *amazingly* across registers showed that as in the analysis of *astonishingly*, Magazine register was found to have the highest frequency of use across registers. Spoken ranked the second followed by newspaper. Academic was found to have the lowest frequency of use among the registers. Finally, after finding out the frequency of these words across registers, their collocational constraints were investigated. The findings of this analysis showed that all of these words collocated with *enough*. However, each of them differed in terms of the frequency of use. *Amazingly* has the highest numbers of *enough* followed by *surprisingly*. *Astonishingly* was found to

have the lowest frequency for *enough*. When these three words were compared with one another in terms of collocational distinctions, it was found while *surprisingly* was found to be collocated with *not*, neither *amazingly* nor *astorishingly* was found to be combined with *not* as pre-modifier.

Conclusion and Recommendations

As shown in the findings, these three words differ from one another with respect to their meanings, registers and collocational constraints. In this sense, understanding the differences among these near-synonyms is important for the lexical choice where the nuances of meaning and collocational constraints need to be conveyed in line with the context, because using one as substitutable with the other may cause wrong and undesired implications. Therefore, it will be beneficial to know that to what extent an item is specified by its collocational environment and the tendencies of items to collocate with one another (Firth, 1957; Uba, 2015). As Firth (1957, p.7, 11) argues “the complete meaning of a word is always contextual” and we “know a word by the company it keeps”. In this sense, corpus-based descriptions of language have been reported to be much more accurate and informative than traditional non-corpus-based descriptions of language (Liu, 2010). For example, several corpus-based research were done on semantic sequences, linking adverbials, phrasal verbs and verbs (Gardner & Davies, 2007; Huntson, 2008; Hunston & Francis 1998; Liu, 2008) and the results revealed detailed information on the lexis and grammar usage which challenge some of the traditional reference materials of language descriptions. In accordance with the findings of the present research, this study also provides insights for internal semantic structures of a set of near-synonyms; *surprisingly*, *astorishingly* and *amazingly*, which highlights the inadequate treatments of these adverbials by the traditional source materials. As for the suggestions for further studies, the corpus-based behavioral profile approach can be applied in examining near-synonyms set. Many researchers note that a corpus-based behavioral profile (BP) study of near-synonym is very effective (Divjak & Gries 2006; Hanks 1996; Liu, 2010; Tylor 2003). This approach is mainly based on the theory that the meaning of a lexical item correlates closely with its behavioral profile or distributional patterns (Liu 2010) and thus, applying a corpus-based BPs will provide further information and description of complex internal semantic structure of near-synonyms.

Conflict of interest

There is no potential conflict of interest in this study.

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Eş anlamlılık kavramı genel olarak iki veya daha fazla farklı sözcük arasındaki anlam benzerliği olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Stanojević, 2009). Her ne kadar eş anlamlı kelimeler anlam içerikleri bakımından birbirine yakın olsalar da eş dizi ve anlamsal doğaları gereği her zaman birbiri yerine kullanılamadıklarından çoğu zaman yakın eş anlamlı kelimeler şeklinde isimlendirilirler (Edmonds & Hirst, 2002). Bu açıdan yakın eş anlamlı olarak geçen kelimeler arasında uygun sözcük seçimi, bağlam kapsamında verilmek istenen ifadenin gerektirdiği düz anlam ve çağrışımları en doğru şekilde yansıtılabilmek adına önemlidir. Öte yandan, tam olarak istenen anlamı yakalamak kolay olmayabilir. Bazen istenilen anlam uygun bir kelime ile sağlanamaz ve bu nedenle bir cümle kurmak gerekir veya birçok kelime önerilebilir, ancak bu durumda da sözlüklerde eş anlamlı olarak verilen yakın eş anlamlı kelimeleri ayırt etmek sorun olabilir (Edmonds, 1999). Örneğin, *foe* (düşman) ve *enemy* (düşman) kelimelerinin her ikisi de -bir başkasına zarar vermeye çalışan birini- ifade eder. Ancak ilki, askeri düşmanlıkları ikincisinden daha fazla vurgular (Gove, 1984). *Lie* (yalan) ve *misrepresentation* (yanlış beyan) arasındaki fark, *lie* kelimesinin kasıtlı bir aldatma girişimi olmasına rağmen, *misrepresentation* kelimesinin kasıtlı olmayabileceği detayında yatmaktadır (Gove, 1984). Örneklerden de anlaşılacağı üzere, doğaları gereği yakın eş anlamlı sözcükler, birbiri yerine kullanılmadan önce karşılaştırılmayı ve anlam farklılıklarının ortaya konmasını gerektirir (Edmonds, 1999). Aksi halde, yanlış kelime kullanımı istenmeyen sonuçlara neden olabilir (Inkpen & Hirst, 2006). Bu durumu önlemek adına yakın eş anlamlı sözcükler arasında

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bir seçim yapmak zorunda kaldığında genellikle sözlüklerden yardım alınır. Öte yandan, sözlükler yakın eş anlamlı kelimelerin birbirinin yerine kullanılamayacakları durumları göstermekte yetersiz kalabilmektedir. Daha doğru sonuçlar için yakın eş anlamlı kelimelerin cümle içi kullanımlarına yönelik verilerin elde edilebileceği derlem tabanlı çalışmalar yol gösterici olarak sunulur. Bu çalışmada da yakın eş anlamlı üç zarf seçilerek (*surprisingly*, *astonishingly* ve *amazingly*) birbirleri arasındaki benzerlik ve farklılıkların anlam, kesit ve eşdizimsel kısıtlamalar açısından ne ölçüde olduğu araştırıldı. Anlamaları bakımından benzerlikleri göstermek için *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, *The American Heritage Dictionary* ve *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* olmak üzere üç standart İngilizce sözlük kullanıldı. Farklılıkların kapsamı, *Webster's New Dictionary of Synonyms* (Gove, 1984) ve *English Synonyms and Antonyms* (Fernald, 1896) sözlükleri kullanılarak araştırıldı. Ancak, bu sözlükler her bir zarfı ne zaman ve nasıl kullanmamız gerektiğine dair ayrıntılı bir açıklama sunmadığından çalışmanın ikinci ana adımında üç zarfın kullanım kalıpları Çağdaş Amerikan İngilizcesi Derlemi (COCA, Mark Davies, <https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/>)'ndeki verilere göre incelendi. Derlemden elde edilen ham veriler genel sıklık kalıplarını ve eşdizimsel kısıtlamaları ortaya çıkarabilmek için belirlenip sayıldı ve ardından yüzdeler olarak hesaplandı. Daha sonra tüm verilerin betimsel analizi yapıldı yorumlandı. Çalışmanın sonucuna göre, her bir zarf sözlüklerde anlamca birbirinin yerine geçebilecek şekilde eş anlamlı olarak verilse de detay incelemede anlamları farklılık gösterdi. Örneğin; “*surprisingly*” bir başkasıyla -aniden ve şaşırtıcı bir etkiyle- karşılaşmak anlamını karşılarken, “*astonishingly*” -baş döndürücü, inanılmaz görünecek kadar çok şaşırtıcı- veya bazen yalnızca -olağandışı- anlamlarını taşıdığı görüldü, ve “*pleased*” (hoşnut, memnun) kelimesi “*surprise*”ı niteleyebiliyorken –“*pleased surprise*”; “*astonishment*” için böyle bir nitelemeye –“*pleased astonishment*” çok nadir olarak rastlandığı tespit edildi. “*Amazingly*”; -sevindiren bir şaşkınlık- anlamını taşıyabildiği gibi (örn. dağların ihtişamından kaynaklanan) -acı verici bir şaşkınlık- anlamını da içerebildiği görüldü (örn. fırtınanın gazabından kaynaklanan). Dahası, “*amazement*” özellikle entellek ile alakalı bir şaşkınlık ifadesi şeklinde kullanılırken “*astonishment*” duygulara yönelik bir şaşkınlık ifadesi olarak karşımıza çıktı. Çalışmanın sonuçları bu üç zarfın oluşum sıklığı ve kesitler arasında kullanım sıklığı açısından da birbirinden farklılık gösterdiğini ortaya koydu. Sonlamalı niteleyen olarak üçünün de en sık “*enough*” ile yan yana geldiğini ve yalnızca “*surprisingly*” zarfının ön-niteleyen olarak “*not*” ile birlikte kullanıldığını ortaya çıkardı. Sonraki çalışmalar yakın eş anlamlı kelime gruplarını derlem tabanlı davranışsal profil yaklaşımı (BP) uygulayarak daha detaylı araştırabilir. Pek çok araştırmacı derlem tabanlı BP uygulamalarının yakın eş anlamlı kelimelerin anlamsal yapılarının analizinde daha fazla bilgi sağlayacağını belirtmektedir (Divjak & Gries 2006; Hanks 1996; Liu, 2010; Tylor 2003)

