



# **Towards a Description of the Phonological Aspects of Synonymy in English**

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## Towards a Description of the Phonological Aspects of Synonymy in English

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#### **Abstract**

There is no doubt that every language in the world has its own phonological system in general and accordingly its own syllabic system in particular, and according to this system it constructs its utterances and weaves its words.

This research is regarded as a linguistic phonological study that deals with the core building block of speech formation, which is the sounds that are linked together to form syllables and words, as from the sounds we enter the internal structure of the syllable and the word.

There is always a need for a new approach that is different from what came before, which in turn contributes to adding something new or correcting shortcomings. This is what motivated the researcher to present this study, which relies on the descriptive analytical approach. The research came in two parts: a theoretical part that tracks synonyms on the one hand and the phonological syllables and their internal structures on the other hand. As for the second part, it includes the analytical aspect that deals with analyzing synonyms phonologically in terms of the syllabic system to know their distinguishing features and studying the relationship between sounds, arriving at the phonological structures of syllables that form these synonyms. It is concluded that synonyms in general tend to have simple syllable structure and the most prevailing pattern in the pairs of synonyms or between the members of each pair is (cvc) pattern with all its derivatives, i e, (ccvcc), (ccvc), or (cvcc).

**Keywords:** synonymy, synonyms, antonyms, syllable, syllable structure.

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### **Introduction**

It is a common knowledge that English is characterized by multiplicity of vocabularies and multiplicity of meanings. Synonymy represents the multiplicity of words that refer to the same sense or meaning, i. e., multiplicity of vocabularies. Synonymy is a useful technique in the English language in which two or more words are used as synonyms for one another if their meanings are similar or quasi-similar. The concept of meaning similarity is crucial in determining the type of synonym. Using synonyms in speaking or writing improves expressing thoughts and ideas and enhances effective communication that avoids redundancy and adds diversity. To the best knowledge of the researcher, this issue elicits little interest from scholars other than endless examples or lists of synonyms. Furthermore, earlier research has focused on the semantic and syntactic components of this phenomenon, yet the current study attempts to illuminate the phonological side, which is as essential as the other two components, in addition to provide theoretical preliminaries concerning the phonology of synonyms. More specifically, it delves deeply in the study of syllables in general and their types and structures in particular. From the aforementioned points the problem and at the same time the importance and value of this research arise. There is no doubt that such investigation would fill a gap in the literature, especially when the findings would be useful in language learning and would facilitate the student acquisition and learning of a language. It is hypothesized that synonyms have specific phonological characteristics on the segmental level of analysis. It is also hypothesized that pairs of synonyms have similar or quasi-similar syllable structure in the syntagmatic relations of phonemes and that would be of benefit to students in learning vocabularies. However, the principal objectives of this study are as follows:

- 1- Exploring the phenomenon of synonymy in English, its origin, and causes. Then the syllable and syllable structure are explained

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- 2- Gathering data (synonyms) from original sources like famous dictionaries and electronic sites in order to analyze them phonologically.
- 3- Analyzing the syllable structure of the data by analyzing those units on the basis of their components sounds (consonants) and (vowels).
- 4- Finding out if there are any phonological relations or similarities between the pair of synonyms and describing them.

To attain these objectives, the researcher uses the analytical descriptive methods in dealing with this topic besides conducting some simple statistics. The data of this research are pairs of synonyms that are selected at random from dictionaries and electronic sites of synonyms.

### **What is Synonymy?**

Synonymy is prevalent in nearly all languages, yet it is superabundance in the English language. The word synonymy has been first utilized since the fifteenth century. It comes from the Latin word 'synonymous'. And in turn it descends from the Greek 'syn' and 'onym' which mean 'together' and 'name', respectively. There exists many definitions for this term in the literature and there is also a wide agreement among linguists about what synonymy is. The definition of synonymy according to Merriam Webster Dictionary is "one or two or more words or expressions of the same language that have the same or nearly the same meaning in some or all senses". Nordquist (2020) does not go far from Merriam Webster Dictionary when he defines a synonym as a word that is characterized by having an identical meaning as another one in specific settings or contexts. According to Cruse (1986: 267) synonyms represent lexical items which have different letters and different forms yet at the same time have similar meaning or nearly similar.

Synonyms in English have several types. Complete synonyms are words that have exactly the same meaning, for instant (big/large) whilst absolute synonyms are words that have identical meaning in certain contexts or situations. For Lyons (1981: 148) unlike other

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linguists there is a distinction between complete and absolute synonymy, as the following quote states:-

"Meaning can be descriptive, expressive and social; and many lexemes combine two of these or all three. If synonymy is defined as identity of meaning, then lexemes can be said to be completely synonymous (in a certain range of contexts) if and only if they have the same descriptive, expressive and social meaning (in the range of contexts in question). They may be described as absolutely synonymous if and only if they have the same distribution and are completely synonymous in all their meanings and in all their contexts of occurrence".

As it is said complete synonymy of words are relatively rare in many languages and that absolute synonymy as it is specified above, is almost not found.

However, this term often contrasted with the term 'antonymy', i. e. the opposite meaning of a word, which is more recent than the term synonymy. In addition, it is often confused with the terms metonymy or polysemy.

The majority of study on synonymy in English focuses on two main areas of analysis, namely the semantic and syntactic elements (Murphy, 2003:137). According to syntactic theory "Synonymy may be any part of speech as long as both words belong to the same part of speech,". In other words, it may be a noun, verb, adjective, and so on. Synonymy can be either full or partial from a semantic standpoint. However, the current study, on the other hand, aims at investigating and describing the phonological elements of synonymy which may be as important as the semantic or syntactic elements.

### **Sources of Synonymy**

English is characterized by the existence of many vocabularies denoting the same sense or meaning. What are the reasons behind this enrichment of English vocabularies? To the best knowledge of the researcher, this is due to the different sources that pour in this language. There are in fact many sources for the huge wealth of synonyms in the English language. Some of them go back to historical events that took place. Other may are due to language

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change, use and development. Still other because the productivity of many linguistic processes in the language itself.

The history of British Isles reveals that the "Britons, Romans, Saxons, Danes, and Normans" battling and settling on the soil of this land could not help but affect each other's speech, this is why O. Jespersen and many other researchers "used to emphasize that the English language is unusually rich in synonyms". Furthermore, scholars in the United Kingdom studied Greek and Latin, where Latin was utilized as a vehicle for academic communication for centuries (Arnold, 2015, 203-204).

Researchers are particularly interested in "the significant role of foreign loan words in English synonymy, such as freedom/liberty and heaven/sky, where the first element is native and the second is French or Scandinavian" where each language has its own set of patterns for synonymy. In contrast with the basic native terms that are stylistically neutral, "literary words acquired from French, and learned words of Greco-Latin" origin are considered as unique aspects of English. As a consequence, one can get a kind of stylistically conditioned triple as seen in the following examples that are taken from (Arnold, 2015):- (belly, stomach, abdomen), (to ask, to question, to interrogate), (to end, to finish, to complete), (teaching, guidance, instruction), (to gather, to assemble, to collect), where the first word in every triple is a native English one, the second word borrowed from French and the third one comes from Latin, respectively (Ibid).

In addition, "many pairs of synonymous derivatives, both Hellenic and Romance", are used in English, for example, periphery/circumstances, hypothesis / supposition, sympathy / compassion, and synthesis / composition.

As it is said, here the importance of the process of borrowing is exaggerated, especially when we know that synonyms are formed through all word-forming processes active in a language at a particular point in time. Words that already exist in the language get new meanings. New words can be produced by affixation or deletion of affixes, conversion, compounding, shortening, and other

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methods, and when coined, they become synonyms for existing terms.

Moreover, lexical differences that are due to lexical, cultural and historic changes among English speaking countries that are found in the varieties of English also produce a number of pairs of synonyms, for example, what is known British English as (biscuit), is known in American English as (cookie) (Carol,2013: 61).

### **Reasons behind Using Synonymy**

To express a nuance of meaning in talking or writing in a stylistic way is regarded as gift for many people. To have the ability to represent an idea effectively by using different vocabularies is viewed as a sign of strong or good English. Furthermore, it is critical to be able to paraphrase a specific piece of writing or reading in order to improve the quality of your writing and avoid plagiarism. Some writers avoid repeating the same word in close proximity, and prefer to use synonyms, in a process called "elegant variation". The following are some of the most common reasons why people use synonyms in English, however, there are others:-

#### **1-Paraphrasing**

Using synonyms to rewrite sentences in order to create a new piece of writing and at the same time to convey the same ideas in a stylistic way is called paraphrasing. As it is evidence, utilizing synonyms are integral part of the process of paraphrasing (Bhagat & Hovey, 2013:463). Some linguists take a narrow viewpoint concerning using paraphrasing where they require to use exactly identical meaning, but the fact that is revealed in the literature concerning this issue shows the use of quasi correspondence synonyms more than complete synonyms. Whether using complete synonyms or parasynonyms, one should not overlook the fact, that synonymy lies in the heart of paraphrasing.

It is a common knowledge that this technique has gained interest in many aspects of academic digital settings including paraphrasing programs, stylistic writing, electronic translation programs, computational linguistics etc.



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### **2- Writing Creatively**

Repeating the same words over and again in writing, especially creative writing, may become tedious and uninteresting. Understanding the importance of word choice in writing and substituting a term with a synonym, or even a more specific one, may help you communicate your thoughts more creatively (Mia, 2012).

If one wants to write creatively and improve the writing skills, commencing by enriching synonyms is the best way. Although synonymy is one of many ways that can be used to write an elegant piece of writing, it also helps to make writing more vivid and creates more intriguing image in the mind of reader (ibid)

### **3-Language Acquisition**

When learning English as a foreign language, vocabulary acquisition is regarded as an integral part of such process. Thus, it is impossible to avoid learning synonyms, homonyms, and antonyms where knowing how to appropriately utilize synonymous, homonymous, and antonymous terms, as well as the relationships that they reflect, is critical for every English student ( Kostadinovska-Stojchevska, 2018: 29).

The influence of synonymy on vocabulary learning is being investigated by many researchers. Surprisingly, it has been discovered that learning pairs of synonyms takes longer than learning pairs of unrelated terms. Where synonymy is one of the several interlexical characteristics that can lower the likelihood of vocabulary acquisition, according to Laufer (1990).

### **4-Expressing a Nuance of Meaning**

Nuance refers to a subtle variation in appearance, meaning, sound, and so on (Cambridge dictionary). It is a trait of something that is hard to detect yet might be significant. Although the subtlety of meaning places additional restrictions on the use of synonyms, researchers have long been interested in examining meaning in the subject of synonyms. In this regard, Permatasari, AbdulMunaf, and Juita (2018) investigate the subtlety of meaning of Indonesian transitive action verbs. Their findings reveal that every transitive verb synonymy visual activity of sight pairs has complex meaning.

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As a result, no synonym pair is discovered that precisely matches one another in terms of meaning.

### **5- Creative Translation**

From observation, the researcher herein can add creative translation as an interesting reason behind using synonyms. Creative translation is "the process of changing the words from one language to another while keeping the original message of the text" (Izie Zielinski, 2022:1). "Creative translation does not mean replacing the text word for word. Instead, it focuses on innovative expressions and wording in the target language to create the same tone and meaning as the source text". However, it is not an easy process; it needs familiarity with synonyms to be used creatively whenever the context requires them. Consequently, creativity in translation is an indication of utilizing and choosing the best available synonyms.

### **Related concepts**

Confusion can be seen between synonymy and metonymy and sometimes may be regarded as mutually related, but in fact they are not. Metonymy is one of the figures of speech that expresses a sort of interaction between words based only on a close connection between them in everyday life. "This intimate link can be based on a container-content relationship, such as can-juice; a whole-part relationship, such as car-wheels/home-roof; or a representative-symbol relationship, such as king-crown/the president-the white house" (Yule, 1996:122).

However, synonymy and metonymy vary in that synonymy is a word or phrase that has the same or very similar meaning as another word or phrase, but metonymy is the use of a single feature or name of an object to identify an entire object or related thing.

Near synonyms, also known as plesionyms, are words that are nearly synonyms but have slightly distinct meanings. "They are separated from cognitive synonyms by the fact that the pairs' connotations change, resulting in differing truth conditions in a given context" (Hirt, 2012:1).

As is seen in the following examples that distinguishing between the two truths criteria. Both phrases relate to the same thing, however it is hard to say what the difference in the truth condition is, and while

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there is a distinction between the lexemes foggy and misty, it is only in connotation and the speaker's attitude (Vomend, 2002).

"It was misty last Friday or, more exactly, it was foggy".

"It was foggy last Friday or, more exactly, it was misty".

### **Semantic Analysis of Synonymy**

Because the similarities between each set of synonyms are more important than the differences, synonyms are classed as complete synonyms or partial synonyms based on their similarity of meaning. Lyons (1981) proposes the idea of absolute synonymy in this regard. Such synonyms are exceedingly unusual, as can be shown. Here, it is crucial to know the difference between partial and absolute synonyms.

They live in big/large house.

Although big and large are sometimes used interchangeably, they are plainly not interchangeable in all of their meanings (May, 2011:6).

There is a commonly held view that in a language, there is no such thing as a genuine or precise synonym. As a result, several attempts to classify synonymy based on semantic connections have come to an agreement to categorize it depending on the semantic relations into:-

#### **1-Complete synonymy**

This type of synonymy is an extremely rare in occurrence as in:

My dad/daddy calls me.

#### **2-Partial synonymy**

They live in big/large house.

Big and large are sometimes used interchangeably, although they are not synonyms in all senses; rather, they are partial synonyms (May, 2011:6).

On the other hand, the semantic relations of lexical synonymy or words close in their lexical meaning has been always the focus of linguistic researchers. It is said that the distinctive features of each synonym is of great significant and stand out as a necessary basis supporting the existence of synonyms in a language. In this regard, Bragina (1979) contends that the distinctive shades of meaning of each synonym are regarded powers of these languages. Rail, Venera

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and Lyutsiya (2017:453-454) in their comparative study of synonymous adjectives find out a number of distinctive features including:

- 1-Gradation of the represented quality:
- 2-Nature of outward expression of the quality/property.
- 3-Circumstances, motivating the quality/property.
- 4-Duration and frequency of quality/property.
- 5-Range of object described
- 6-Semantic association
- 7-Logical emphasis

### **Syntactic Analysis of Synonymy**

It is a fact that synonyms could be any part of speech, it could be a noun, a verb, an adjective, an adverb. Despite the fact, that this sort of analysis receives less study and attention, there are a number of works that deal with syntactic relations or syntactic characteristics of synonyms. As demonstrated in Henkel's study (2020:1), there are differences in one or more adjectival functions between some adjectives that may be considered quasi-synonyms, such as glad/happy. Henkel says ( Henkel, 2020: 86) "Despite their seemingly identical meanings, the pairs of parasynonyms glad/happy and sorry/sad have nearly entirely distinct syntactic characteristics,".

### **Phonological Analysis of Synonymy**

Although the majority of synonymy research focuses on semantic links, whether similar or dissimilar or syntactic categories, whether nouns or verbs, the phonological relations whether syntagmatic or paradigmatic should not be overlooked when dealing with synonymy. In this sense, Saeed (1997) contends that synonyms are words that have distinct phonological forms but have a very similar meaning. In the same vein, the researcher argues that synonyms pair may have a phonological similarity in one way or another. Thus, the researcher attempts to find out if there is such a phonological similarity between each pair of synonyms or among the group of synonyms.

It is found that in the context of language learning and acquisition, learning a synonym of a previously learned term is easier than

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learning a non-synonym. In this regard, Nation (2001:24) introduces the concept of "learning burden" which is a burden that is explained within the use of sounds of a language, as revealed in the following quotation:-

" If a word uses sounds that are in the first language with roughly the same meaning, fits into roughly similar grammatical patterns as in the first language with similar collocations and constraints, then the learning burden will be very light".

By extension, and by moving from Nation's point of view, the researcher argues that there is a phonological similarity between any pair of synonyms that make it easy to learn since the "learning burden" is light because of that sameness. The current study is an attempt to spot more light on the phonological aspect of synonyms. More specifically, it deals with an aspect of phonological analysis other than individual sounds, namely, the syllable structure of synonyms to see if there are any syllabification relationships among the synonyms of a particular word. Herein, the researcher calls for another study to find out whether these relations hindering or promoting the acquisition of synonyms in the light of a belief that says if there is a similarity in the syllabification of pairs of synonymy, this will also have its effects on language learners, i.e., the learning burden is light on them.

### **The Syllable**

In the world of languages, phonology is the branch of linguistics that studies the sounds of a language and the ways in which they are formed and pronounced. In this article, we will delve into the importance of syllable structure in the English phonology, and state how this contributes to improving learners' pronunciation and listening skills. the researcher opens the door to a deep understanding of how syllables are constructed, and how sounds interact with each other to form the entire words. This deep understanding contributes to enhancing learners' ability to pronounce correctly and understand spoken speech properly.

To begin with, a syllable is "the basic unit of speech that is studied on both the phonetic and phonological levels of analysis". It plays

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an important role in spoken English. "It is a rhythmic unit of sound that gets one ("beat" in a word)". In this regard, a word can be classified into monosyllabic (one syllable), disyllabic (two syllables), trisyllabic (three syllables), four syllabic and polysyllabic. The structure of syllable in English could be recognized phonetically and phonologically. Phonetically speaking, it includes three components: at the beginning, there is an onset; in the middle there is a peak and at the end, there is a coda. Phonologically speaking, the composition of syllable structure consists of the nucleus or the centre which usually a vowel preceded by an onset and followed by a coda. However, the onset and coda in both dimensions are usually consonants (Roach, 2000: 67 and Crystal, 2003:447).

### **Structure of syllable**

Syllable structure analysis includes studying the phonological structure of words and how they are composed of individual syllables where the syllable herein is the basic unit of speech that consists of one or more sounds.

"The central part of a syllable is a vowel sound (V) which may be preceded and/or followed by a consonant (C) or a cluster of consonants (CC or CCC). Phonological theories of syllable are mostly concerned with internal structure of syllables, in this respect; phonologists have adduced every possible configuration for the internal structure of syllables. For instance, the main concern of CVC syllables, is whether the vowel is grouped with the prior consonant (called the onset), with the posterior consonant (called the coda), or with neither" (Faris, 2006: 25).

Consequently, four principal patterns of syllables can be found, they are:

"(0v0), (cv0), (0vc) and (cvc). In this case, the syllable may be a vowel only, namely the pattern (0v0), as in (or) this kind of syllable is known as a 'minimum syllable'. The syllable which is not closed by a consonant, namely the pattern (cv0) as in fee /fi:/ is called an 'open' syllable. At the other hand, the pattern (0vc) is known as a 'closed' syllable since the syllable is closed by a consonant as in (as) /az/". (Gimson, 1989:343 and Crystal, 2004:246).

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### **Division of syllable**

'Syllable division' or 'syllabification' are two terms referring to the same concept which are used interchangeably. Phonological theories including the generative theory, the prominence theory, impulse theory, the optimal theory, etc. have divided the syllable units differently according to their different perspectives that extend from linearity to hierarchy. For instance, the sonority theory (the prominence theory) asserts, "a syllable is phonetically a peak in prominence resulting from a combination of stress, length, pitch and intrinsic sonority"(Trask. 1996: 289). While the optimality theory (the constraint based theory) divides the syllable into two constituents: the onset and the rime, the rime then further divided into the vowel and the coda (usually a consonant) (Katamba, 1989: 45). Nevertheless, Crystal (2003:447) defines "syllabification as the term which refers to the division of a word into syllables". A number of scholars including (Bulgram, 1970:75 and Carr, 1993:198-202) propose a set of principles of syllabification:

- 1- A principle of maximal open syllabicity.
- 2- A principle of minimal coda and maximal onset.
- 3- A principle of irregular coda.

Fallow (1980: 78) expands on the previously described concepts by proposing "two more syllabification principles: emphasis and ambisyllabicity". A stressed syllable will draw the greatest number of consonants to its initial and final positions, according to the former principle. On the other hand, the latter principle illustrates how neighboring syllables share an intervocalic consonant, so a word like begin would be syllabified as (be.gin) or (beg.in). Additionally, according to Crystal (2003:246), the phonetic instinct and the grammatical instinct are the two instincts that guide the definition of syllable boundaries. For example, (standing) has two syllables. One can distinguish between 'stan' and 'ding' or 'stand' and 'ing'? The former analysis will be favored if the phonetic impulse is obeyed. If the grammatical instinct is followed and the division is done between the base form and the inflection, the latter analysis will be preferred.



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### Data of the study

The body of data in this study mainly comes from the topic of near synonyms found in unit ten in the English textbook studied in Iraqi colleges, nearly in most Iraqi universities which entitled, "Headway Plus", the student's book for upper intermediate level for (Liz and John Soars, 2013: 92). Furthermore, the data also includes the most searched published in the electronic site Thesaurus.com. The analysis is not limited to any specific part of speech; it is only limited to segmental phonological aspects of synonyms. More specifically, it is limited to syllable structure analysis, i. e., any suprasegmental issue is out of the scope of the current analysis.

**Table (1) List of Synonyms**

word	syllable structure and division	No. of syllables	synonym	syllable structure and division	No. of syllables
aim /eɪm/	aim (cvc)	one	end /end/	end (cvc)	one
allow /əlaʊ/	al.low (vc.cv)	two	permit pə'mɪt/	per.mit (cv.cvc)	two
begin /bɪɡɪn/	be.gin (cv.cvc)	two	commence /kə'mens/	com.mence (cvc.cvcc)	two
concern /kən'sɜ:n/	con.cern (cvc.cvc)	two	worry /wɜrɪ/	wor.ry cvc.cv	two
clear /klɪə/	clear (ccv)	one	pure /pjʊə/	pure (ccv)	one
tasty /teɪstɪ/	tas.ty (cvc.cv)	two	tasteful /teɪstfʊl/	taste.ful (cvcc.cvc)	two
describe /dɪ'skraɪb /	de.scribe (cv.cccvc)	two	depict /dɪ'pɪkt/	de.pict (cv.cvcc)	two
dreadful /dredfʊl/	dread.ful (ccvc.cvc)	two	fearful fɪəfʊl	fear.ful (cv.cvc)	two
fat /fat/	fat (cvc)	one	flab /flab/	flab (ccvc)	one
firstly	first.ly (cvcc.cv)	two	initially	ini.tial.ly (vcv.cvc.cv)	three



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/fɜrstli/			/ɪnɪʃəli/		
frequent	fre.quent (ccv.ccvc)	two	recurrent	re.cur.rent (cv.cv.cvc)	three
/fri:kwən t/			/rɪkɜrənt/		
happy	hap.py (cvc.cv)	two	merry	mer.ry (cvc.cv)	two
/hæpi/			/merɪ/		
partner	part.ner (cvc.cv)	two	husband	hus.band (cvc.cvc)	two
/pɑtnə/			/hʌzbənd/		
furious	fu.ri.ous (ccv.cv.vc)	three	angry	an.gry (vc.cvc)	two
/fjʊriəs/			/æŋgrɪ/		
softly	soft.ly (cvcc.cv)	two	slowly	slow.ly (ccv.cv)	two
/sɒftli/			/sləʊli/		
hasty	has.ty cvc.cv	two	speedy	spee.dy (ccv.cv)	two
/heɪsti/			/spi:di/		
estimate	es.ti.mate (vc.cv.cvc)	three	speculate	spec.u.late (ccvc.cv.cvc)	three
/estɪment/			/spekjəleɪt/		
kid	kid (cvc)	one	child	child (cvcc)	two
/kɪd/			/tʃaɪld/		
helpless	help.less (cvc.cvc)	two	powerless	power.less (cv.cvc)	two
/helpɪs/			/paʊəɪs/		
novel	nov.el (cvc.vc)	two	story	sto.ry (ccv.cv)	two
/nɒvl/			/stɔ:ri/		
amaze	a.maze (v.cvc)	two	surprise	sur.prise (cv.ccvc)	two
/əmeɪz/			/səpraɪz/		
shout	shout (cvc)	one	scream	scream (cccvc)	one
/ʃaʊt/			/skri:m/		
sprang	sprang (cccvc)	one	leapt	leapt (cvcc)	one
/spræŋ/			/li:pt/		
talk	talk (cvc)	one	speak	speak (ccvc)	one
/tɔ:k/			/spi:k/		
luckless	luck.less (cvc. cvc)	two	hapless	hap.less (cvc.cvc)	two
/lʌklɪs/			/hæplɪs/		

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### The phonological analysis

Syllable analysis assists in recognizing patterns and rules in the construction of syllables and words besides understanding their phonotactics (sounds clustering).

Word	aim	end
Syllabification	aim	end
no.syllables	one	one
Syllable structure	vc	vcc

By dividing these two words into their constituents, it is clear that this pair of synonyms has the same number of syllables, i. e., having one syllable in each. The synonyms (aim/end) are similar in their syllable structures where they represent the closed syllable pattern (vc) and (vcc) respectively. However, consonant cluster is present at the end of the word (end) unlike the word (aim) which does not have any kind of consonant cluster.

Word	novel	story
Syllabification	nov.el	sto.ry
no. syllables	two	two
Syllable structure	cvc.vc	ccv. cv

These synonyms have the same number of syllables (two) where the word (novel) can be divided into two distinct units of sounds: (nov) and (el). These two syllables have distinct structure and their vowel sounds are different.

As for the word (story), it can be divided into two distinct units of sounds: (sto) and (ry). The two syllables have distinct structure (ccv) and (cv) where their vowel sounds are different. It is noticed that there is a consonant cluster at the onset of the first syllable (sto), however such clustering is not found in (novel).

Word	estimate	speculate
Syllabification	es.ti.mate	spec.u.late
no.syllables	three	three
Syllable structure	vc.cv.cvc	cvc.cv.cvc

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The above table depicts that these synonyms have the trisyllabic structure in both of them. Although they are similar in number of syllables, they are different internal structures. Accordingly, there is only one aspect of similarity between the members of this pair, although their structures are different. However, the (cvc) pattern is present in both of them.

Word	dreadful	fearful
Syllabification	dread.ful	fear.ful
no.syllables	two	two
Syllable structure	ccvc.cvc	cv.cvc

By making a comparison between the two words of this pair of synonymy, it is clear that they have different syllable structure. The word (dreadful) has the structure (ccvc.cvc) with consonant clustering at the onset of the first syllable. Whilst the structure of (fearful) contains (cv.cvc) with no clustering pattern. However, both words consist of two syllables. The morphological rule of syllabification is evident herein where the prefix (ful) is available in both of them and has its role in dividing each one then into two syllables.

Word	describe	depict
Syllabification	de.scribe	de.pict
no.syllables	two	two
Syllable structure	cv.ccvc	cv.cvcc

To compare the syllable structures of these two synonyms, it can be seen that they have the same number of syllables, namely two syllables, but their structures are different and there is no shared clustering pattern among them. The word (describe) has consonant cluster at the beginning of the second syllable whereas the word (depict) has a clustering pattern at the end of the second syllable although they are identical at the starting syllable in both of them, i.e., (their structure is (cv)).

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Word	luckless	hapless
Syllabification	luck.less	hap.less
no.syllables	two	two
Syllable structure	cvc.cvc	cvc.cvc

As it is evident, the number syllables of this pair of synonym is identical where both words have two syllables, besides that the structure of all syllables is also similar by having the structure of (cvc). Most important to say is that the role of the morphological rule of syllabification is clearly present with the prefix (less) at the end of both of them.

Word	clear	pure
Syllabification	clear	pure
no.syllables	one	one
Syllable structure	ccv	ccv

The similarity in syllable structure and number of syllable is clear in this pair of synonym where both of them have the widely used pattern (ccv). Both of the have the phonotactic pattern of consonant (cc) at the start of the syllable.

### Results

Quantitatively speaking and as it is obvious from table (1), from the whole (50) synonyms (13) words of them consist of one syllable, (32) of them have two syllables and (5) of them contain three syllables.

As for the internal structure of syllables, the whole number of syllables is (92). The (cvc) pattern is found in (33) syllables. The open (cv) pattern is found in (26) syllables.

### Conclusions

The English synonymy has a distinguishing syllabic system that is featured by its own characteristics. However, some important issues can be concluded from the above results:-

-The syllable in English synonyms may begin with a consonant or a vowel.

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-The vowel sound is an essential and obligatory part of any syllable in English synonyms.

-The most common syllable in English synonyms is the short syllable cv or vc. The reason for this is that they are two structures of free syllables that may occur at the beginning, middle, or end of the word.

-The dominant structure of monosyllabic synonym is (cvc) with its derivatives that contain consonant clustering at the start of the syllable, such as ((ccc)vc) or (cv(ccc)) that have consonant clustering at the end, for example, cccvc as in (sprang) and cvcc as in (leapt).

-The minimum number of syllables in English synonyms is one syllable, and the maximum number of syllables these words is two or three. However, this reveals that synonyms tends to have simple syllable structure in order to be acquired easily by learners of the language.

All in all and from the above analyzed data and findings that are taken in details; the researcher is not able to elicit a specific syllable structure pattern between the members of each pair synonym to make generalization upon it. Nor she can elicit a general syllable structure pattern that is predominantly found in the whole data. Although the one syllable structure with (an onset consonant at the beginning, a vowel in the centre, and a coda consonant at the end) is prevailing in the data in general, but, the cvc pattern is not prevailing in all monosyllable words. For example, there are other patterns: ccvc, as in (broad) and (cruel); cvcc is present in (short); cccvc is found in (strong); and the longer monosyllabic pattern ccvcc is found in (friend).

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