

Distinguishing Semantic Preference Of *Hurry* And *Rush* Via Collocational Patterns: A Corpus-Based Study

I Made Luis Harta

Faculty of Humanities, English Department, Udayana University, Indonesia
Email: i.madeluisharta@gmail.com

Gede Primahadi Wijaya Rajeg

Faculty of Humanities, English Department, Udayana University, Indonesia
Email: primahadi_wijaya@unud.ac.id

Ni Ketut Sri Rahayuni

Faculty of Humanities, English Department, Udayana University, Indonesia
Email: sri_rahayuni@unud.ac.id

Korespondensi penulis: i.madeluisharta@gmail.com

Abstract. Verbs are the action words that describe what the subject is doing. Many verbs are synonymous, namely, they could convey very similar meanings, such as the verbs *hurry* and *rush*, which roughly convey ‘speeded actions’. This paper presents a corpus linguistic study of the semantic preferences of *hurry* and *rush* in terms of the nouns that co-occur (i.e., collocate) with them. The noun collocations data, and their degree of association with the verbs, were extracted from the Corpus of Contemporary American English focusing on collocates appearing within a two-words window to the right (i.e., after) and to the left of (i.e., before) *hurry* and *rush*. These collocates were further analyzed semantically for (i) their semantic fields using the Concepticon catalogue (List et al. 2023) and (ii) their broader noun types (Wren 2021). Overall, we found that *hurry* and *rush* exhibit distinct collocational patterns and semantic preferences, particularly in terms of the preferred semantic fields (e.g., KINSHIP, RELIGION AND BELIEF, EMOTION AND VALUE are semantic fields preferred for the left-side collocates of *hurry* while *rush* is associated with THE BODY and SOCIAL AND POLITICAL RELATIONS). This study shows that synonymous verbs can have distinct semantic patterns.

Keywords: Verb, Collocation, Semantic Field, Noun, Corpus Linguistic

Abstrak. Kata kerja menggambarkan tindakan yang subjek lakukan. Banyak kata kerja yang bersinonim, yaitu, mereka dapat menyampaikan arti yang sangat mirip, seperti *rush* dan *hurry*, yang pada dasarnya berarti ‘tindakan yang dipercepat’. Makalah ini menyajikan analisis linguistik korpus tentang preferensi semantik *rush* dan *hurry* dalam kaitannya dengan nomina yang berkolokasi dengan kedua verba tersebut. Data kolokasi nomina, dan derajat kedekatannya dengan *rush* dan *hurry*, diperoleh dari Corpus of Contemporary American English. Data difokuskan pada kolokasi yang muncul dalam rentang dua kata di sebelah kanan dan di sebelah kiri *rush* dan *hurry*. Kolokasi ini selanjutnya dianalisis secara semantik terkait (i) medan semantik kolokat nominanya menggunakan katalog semantik Concepticon (List et al. 2023) dan (ii) tipe nomina yang lebih luas (Wren 2021). Secara keseluruhan, kami menemukan bahwa *rush* dan *hurry* menunjukkan pola kolokasi dan preferensi semantik yang berbeda, terutama dalam hal medan semantik yang condong muncul (misalnya, KINSHIP, AGAMA DAN KEPERCAYAAN, EMOSI DAN NILAI adalah medan semantik yang lebih disukai untuk kolokasi sisi kiri dari *hurry* sementara *rush* dikaitkan dengan TUBUH dan

HUBUNGAN SOSIAL DAN POLITIK). *Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa kata kerja sinonim dapat memiliki pola semantik yang berbeda.*

Kata kunci: Kata Kerja, Kolokasi, Medan Semantik, Kata Benda, Linguistik Korpus

INTRODUCTION

Synonyms are two or more words that have the same meaning and help to make a sentence more interesting according to Hornby (2010). An example of a synonym can be found in the verbs *look* and *see*. Those words appear to have the same meaning at a first glimpse, but a closer examination reveals misunderstandings or ambiguities. The use of collocation is necessary to avoid synonym ambiguity. According to Beare (2020), a group of two or more words that are frequently used together to create a specific meaning is referred to as a collocation.

Synonymy is a fascinating topic to discuss. English learners require a wide range of words and their vocabularies. Learning a new vocabulary and knowing their similar meanings can be useful in creating an appropriate sentence or paragraph for an essay or even in communication to avoid ambiguity or misunderstanding in choosing the appropriate word for written or communication.

Two synonymous verbs are chosen for this research, namely, *rush* and *hurry*. *Rush* and *hurry* have similar meanings, but the way those words are used can still be ambiguous. This paper presents a corpus-linguistic, semantic study of *rush* and *hurry* in, so that ambiguity can be minimized and improve comprehension of the verb meanings can be improved.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are some studies references in this research that are related, both in terms of the object of study and the corpus method used. The journal article from Kartal & Yol (2017) identifies the most frequently used adjectives in academic texts and to see if they differ in frequency and function in the social sciences, technology, and medicine. The method used in this study is quantitative to analyze the diagram and data of each adjective in the research. The second article by Liu & Shen (2012) uses corpus data to investigate the properties of the English suffix *-esque*, including its etymology, semantic meaning, formation rules, orthographic properties, productivity, and stylistic tendency. The quantitative method was used to analyze the percentage that appears in the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (hereafter, COCA) (Davies, 2010). Third, the journal by Noor et al. (2015) proposes an analysis of the linguistic strategies employed by TV commercial copywriters to sway the target audience. The

qualitative method was used in this research to explain the data descriptively. Fourth, the international journal from Altohami & Salama (2019) was added. The purpose of this study is to investigate the themes that pertain to Saudi women's issues and to talk about the discursive tactics used to spread these issues based on COCA. The method used is a mixed method, quantitative analysis includes percentages from the data of COCA, while qualitative analysis was used to describe how Saudi women are portrayed in the media. The corpus-based study Sayyed & Al-Khanji (2019) aims to investigate the similarities and differences between the words terrified, startled, fearful, horrified, and petrified. The method used is a mixed method, the researchers used frequencies per million for the quantitative. Finally, the study by Ariestiawati et al. (2023) is also similar to Sayyed and Al-Khanji (2019) and the present study to look at semantic similarities and differences between synonymous words. Finally, the study by Ariestiawati et al. (2023) and the present study to look at semantic similarities and differences between synonymous words. Ariestiawati et al. (2023) focus on collocational patterns and semantic fields of the adjective near-synonyms for BEAUTY. The present study adopts Ariestiawati et al.'s (2023) approach to using the *Concepticon* catalogue (List et al. 2023) to categorize the semantic fields of the noun collocates of rush and hurry.

METHOD

COCA is the corpus resource used to access the collocation data for *hurry* and *rush*. We use the “Compare” section in COCA (see Rajeg 2020 for the audiovisual tutorial) to compare the collocational preferences of *rush* and *hurry* to retrieve this data, in the search field of the “Compare” section, type the word “*hurry_v*” (as the Word1), and “*rush_v*” (Word2). The “_v” is a tag to indicate that the search is for *hurry* and *rush* as a verb (not as other word classes). Next, click the [POS] option to the right of the “Collocates” and then select the “noun.ALL+” or type “NOUN+” to restrict to the noun collocates. The next step is to choose the window span around the target verb where the collocates would appear. In this paper, the target window spans are two words to the right and two words to the left of the verbs. To capture the left-side collocates within the 2-word window, put 2 Left (2L) for the first data. Finally, click the “Compare word” button then the data will appear on the screen. This search procedure was repeated to find data for the right-side collocates of the verbs within the 2-word window span. Finally, after the collocates are retrieved, together with their association scores, the collocates are further analyzed semantically in terms of their semantic field using the *Concepticon* catalogue (List et al. 2023), and of their noun types (Wren 2021). The distribution

of the semantic field categories (as well as the noun types) was derived from the sum of the association scores of the noun collocates that belong to a given semantic field/noun type.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Frequency of *Hurry* and *Rush* across genres

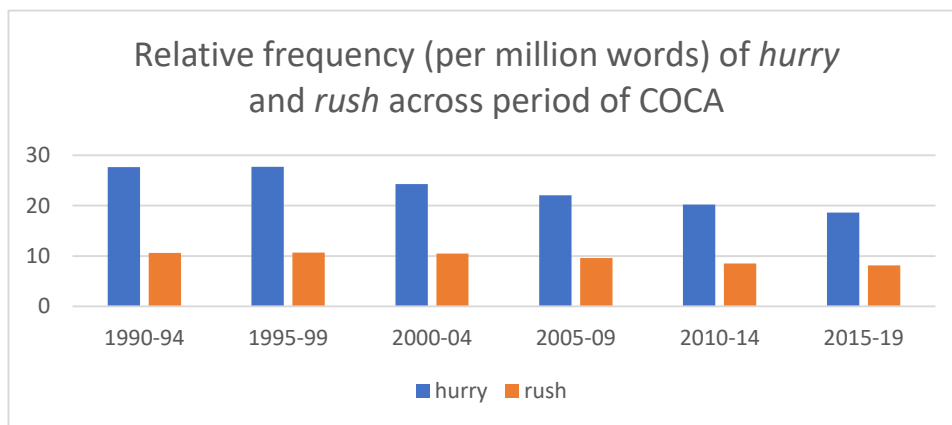


Figure 1. Relative frequency (per million words) of *hurry* and *rush* across period of COCA

Figure 1 shows that, *hurry* and *rush* had quite a noticeable decrease each year. However, the overall higher frequency of *hurry* (compared to *rush*) is also reflected across the periods of COCA where *hurry* is predominant in each period. Figure 2 below shows an interesting asymmetric distribution between these near-synonymous verbs in each genre.

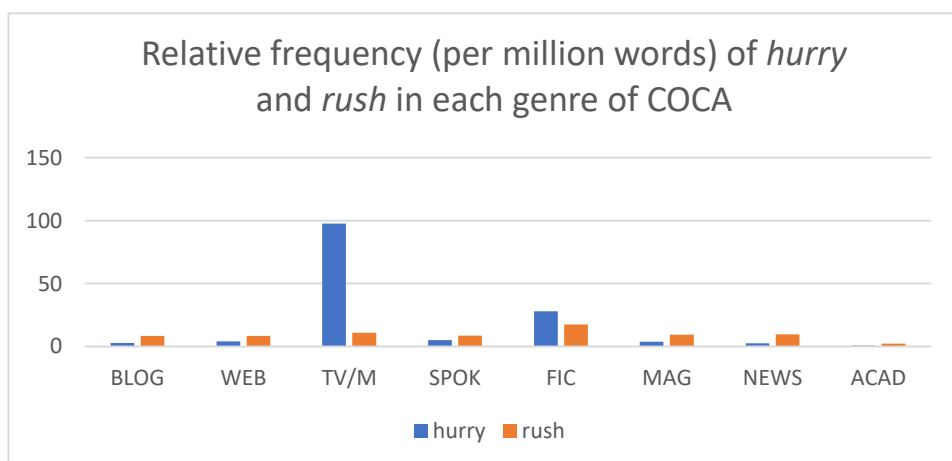


Figure 2. Relative frequency (per million words) of *hurry* and *rush* in each genre of COCA

Hurry is greatly more frequent in TV/Movie and slightly more frequent in Fiction than *rush*. In the remainder of the genres, it is *rush* that is more frequent than *hurry*. Overall, near-synonymous verbs such as *hurry* and *rush* might be semantically similar, but they appear to

have different frequencies in different genres of language use. Such genre differences cannot be extracted based on intuition but are in need of corpus data to provide more measurable evidence.

2. The Collocational Patterns of Hurry and Rush in COCA

2.1. Collocates within the two-word windows to the left *Hurry* and *Rush*.

Figure 1 below shows the results of the comparison of left-side, noun collocates for hurry and rush. The different colours reflect the different degree to which the noun collocates with the two verbs. Highlighter green (very typical), light green (typical), grey (as neutral), pink (atypical), and red (very atypical). Word 1 (W1) was the verb hurry and Word 2 (W2) was the verb rush. The values in the W1 and W2 columns represent the frequency of co-occurrence between the collocates (in the WORD column) and Word 1 and 2, respectively. The higher the value in the SCORE column, the more frequently the collocate is related to each of the two verbs.

SEE CONTEXT: CLICK ON NUMBERS (WORD 1 OR 2) [HELP...]
 SORTED BY RATIO: CHANGE TO [FREQUENCY](#)

WORD 1 (W1): HURRY (1.96)						WORD 2 (W2): RUSH (0.51)					
	WORD	W1	W2	W1/W2	SCORE		WORD	W2	W1	W2/W1	SCORE
1	GOD	56	1	56.0	28.5	1	ADRENALINE	62	0	124.0	243.6
2	SHIT	24	0	48.0	24.4	2	FOOLS	58	0	116.0	227.9
3	DAD	29	2	14.5	7.4	3	PASS	47	0	94.0	184.7
4	MOM	29	2	14.5	7.4	4	GOLD	40	1	40.0	78.6
5	MAN	67	5	13.4	6.8	5	BLOOD	54	2	27.0	53.1
6	WAY	64	6	10.7	5.4	6	HISTORY	20	1	20.0	39.3
7	SAM	20	2	10.0	5.1	7	RUSH	24	2	12.0	23.6
8	BACK	23	3	7.7	3.9	8	PEOPLE	140	24	5.8	11.5
9	GUYS	59	11	5.4	2.7	9	MEN	38	7	5.4	10.7
10	DOOR	29	7	4.1	2.1	10	COPS	20	4	5.0	9.8
11	CAR	21	9	2.3	1.2	11	NEED	142	62	2.3	4.5
12	TIME	38	20	1.9	1.0	12	REASON	54	26	2.1	4.1
13	REASON	26	54	0.5	0.2	13	WATER	22	16	1.4	2.7
14	NEED	62	142	0.4	0.2	14	TIME	20	38	0.5	1.0
15	PEOPLE	24	140	0.2	0.1						

1..117

Figure 3. Comparison of Collocates to the right of Hurry and Rush.

Based on Figure 3 above, hurry (W1), only has two very typical (highlighter green) noun collocates (i.e., God and Shit) while eight collocates are typical (light green). There are two neutrals collocates (*Car* and *Time*) and three that are non-typical (*Reason*, *Need*, and *People*). In contrast, for *rush* (W2) has a greater number of very typical collocates (i.e., nine collocates) than hurry, with the only one neutral collocate (i.e., *Time*, which is also neutral for hurry). What is interesting from this comparison is that the non-typical collocates for hurry (i.e., *Reason*, *Need*, and *People*) are those that are typically associated with rush. This first

result alone already demonstrates the value of exploring usage patterns of near-synonymous verbs using quantitative, corpus-based data. Section 1.2 next focuses on the right-side collocates of hurry and rush.

2.2. Collocates within the two-word windows to the right of *Hurry* and *Rush*

There are fewer collocates data produced for the right-side collocates in Figure 4 below compared to the one we see in Figure 3.

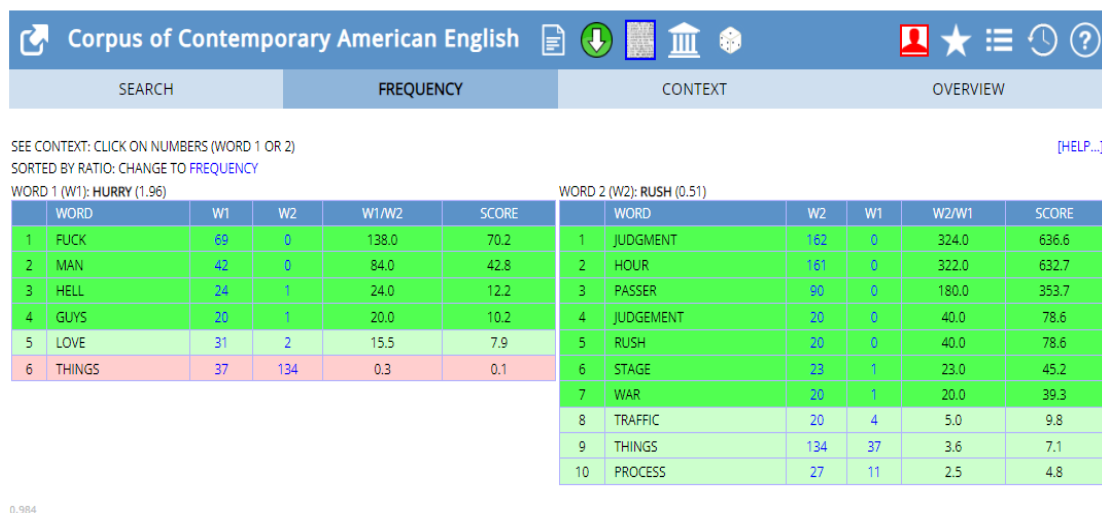


Figure 4. Comparison of Collocates to the right of *Hurry* and *Rush*

Based on Figure 4, *hurry* (W1), has fewer (i.e., only four) very-typical collocates than *rush* (W2) (seven collocates). Moreover, the non-typical collocate of *hurry* (i.e., *Things*) is preferred by *rush*. We can also observe that there is a stark asymmetry in the frequency of co-occurrences of the collocates with the verb. For example, most of the very-typical collocates of *rush* (i.e., *Judgment/Judgement*, *Hour*, *Passer*, *Rush*) never occur with *hurry*. Similarly, the very-typical collocates of *hurry*, namely *Fuck* and *Man*, also never appear with *rush*.

3. The semantic field distribution of the collocates of *hurry* and *rush*

After presenting the noun collocates preferred by each verb in the previous section, in this section, we present the qualitative semantic analysis of the semantic field of these collocates. We categorized the collocates according to their semantic field with reference to the cross-linguistic semantic catalogue called Concepticon (List et al, 2023). Then, the prominence of each semantic field is measured by summing up the values in the SCORE column shown in the output of the collocate comparison. That is, the SCORE values for

collocates in each semantic field are summed to represent the prominence of the semantic field for each verb; this approach is adapted from Wulff et al. (2007) and (Rajeg, 2014).

3.1. Distribution of semantic field of the left-side collocates for *hurry* and *rush*.

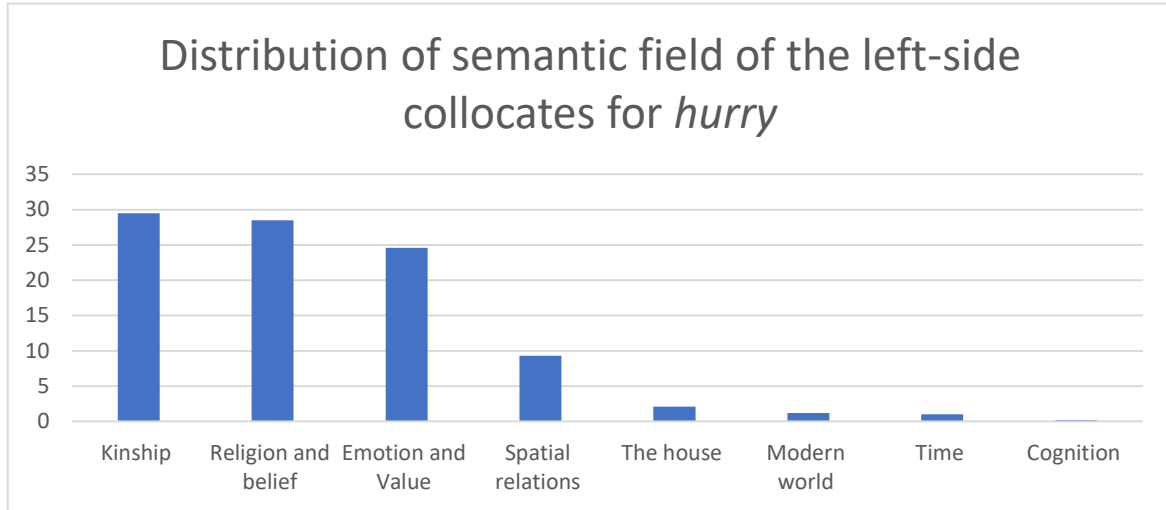


Figure 5. Distribution of semantic field of the left-side collocates for *hurry*

Figure 5 shows that three semantic fields are predominant from the left-side collocates of *hurry*. The first is KINSHIP (summed SCORE value of 29.5), due to the noun collocates related to person/mankind which were “*Dad, Mom, Man, Sam, Guys, People*” co-occurring with *hurry*. The RELIGION AND BELIEF and EMOTIONS AND VALUES follow the second and third predominant semantic fields.

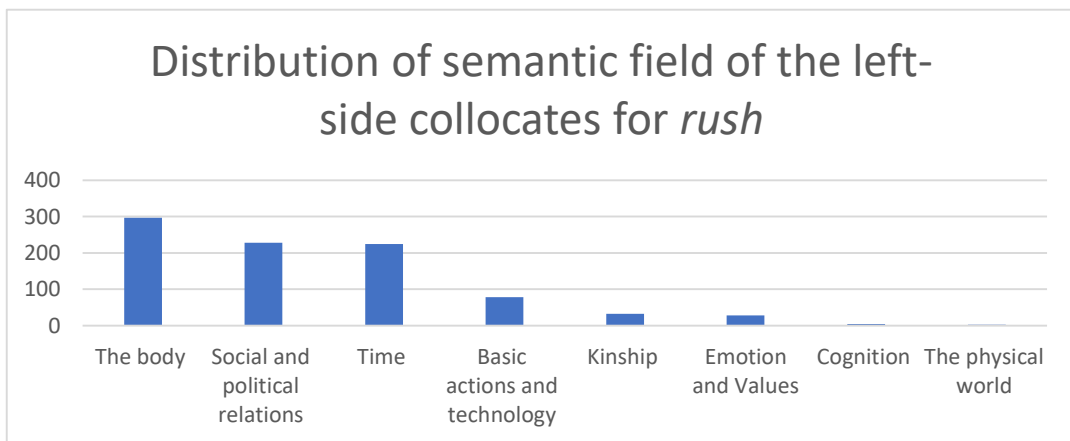


Figure 6. Distribution of semantic field of the left-side collocates for *rush*

Figure 6 shows the distribution of semantic fields evoked by the left-side collocates of *rush*. In contrast to *hurry*, *rush* prefers collocates referring to THE BODY (summed score of 296.7) due to the predominance of the nouns such as “*Adrenaline, and Blood*”. Furthermore,

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL RELATIONS, and TIME follows as the second and third predominant field respectively. From the two comparisons, we can clearly see distinct semantic preferences between *rush* and *hurry*.

3.2. Distribution of the semantic field of the right-side collocates for hurry and rush.

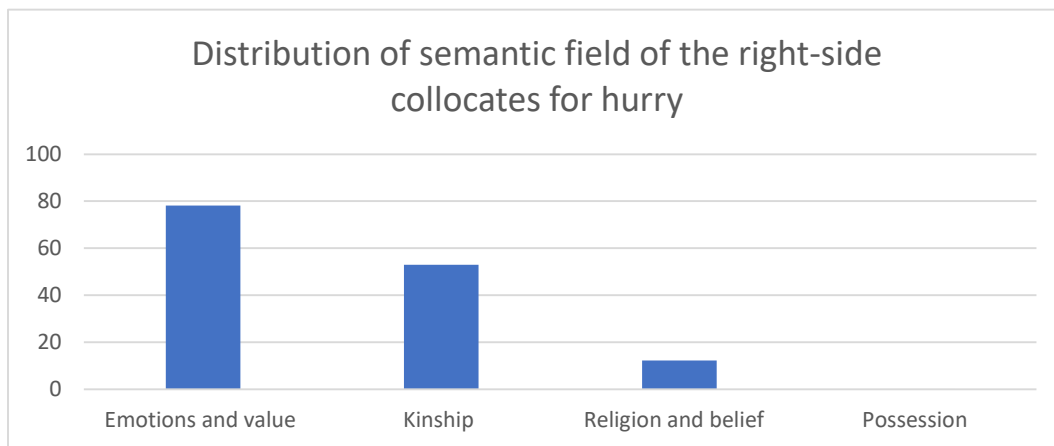


Figure 7. Distribution of semantic field of the right-side collocates for hurry

Figure 7 reflects the relative predominance of EMOTIONS AND VALUE (summed SCORE of 78.1; represented by nouns such as *Fuck* and *Love*) and KINSHIP (summed SCORE of 53) for hurry shown in Figure XXX above. However, RELIGION AND BELIEF is not as predominant as the right-side collocates for hurry as that for the left-side collocates for hurry.

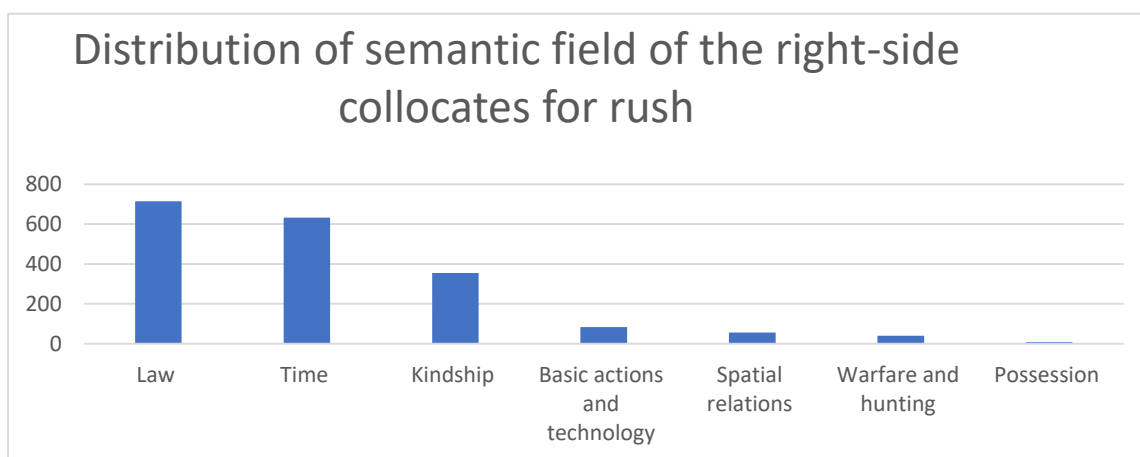


Figure 8. Distribution of semantic field of the right-side collocates for rush

Finally, Figure 8 shows the different semantic distribution for *rush* compared to *hurry*. Noun collocates referring to the LAW field (summed SCORE of 715.2) predominates due to the

noun “*Judg(e)ment*” which is distinctive for *rush*. The second predominant semantic field is TIME (SCORE of 632.7 due to the noun *Hour*). As with *hurry*, *rush* is also associated with KINSHIP right-side collocates.

4. Distribution of the types of noun collocates for *hurry* and *rush*.

4.1. Noun types of the left-side collocates for *hurry* and *rush*

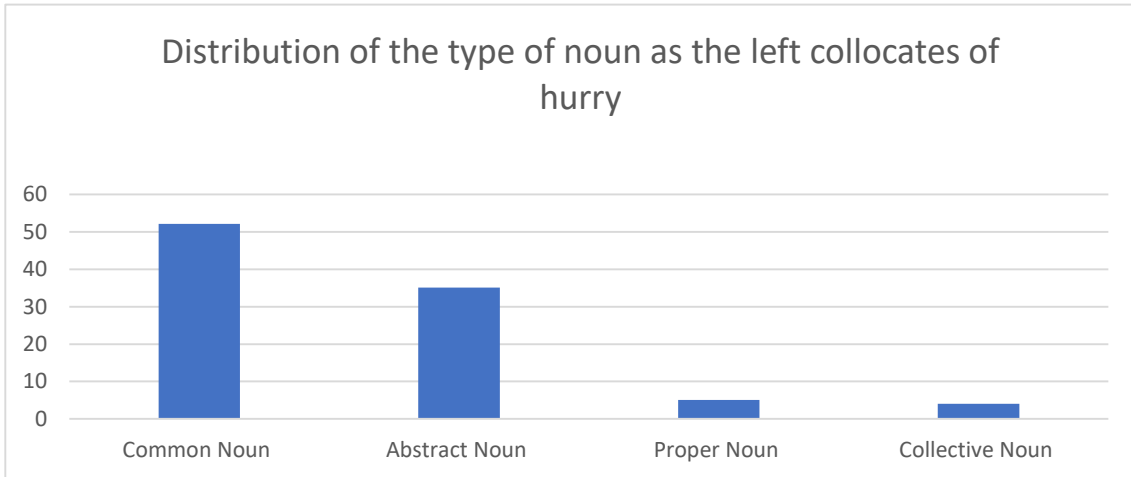


Figure 9. Distribution of the type of noun as the left collocates of hurry

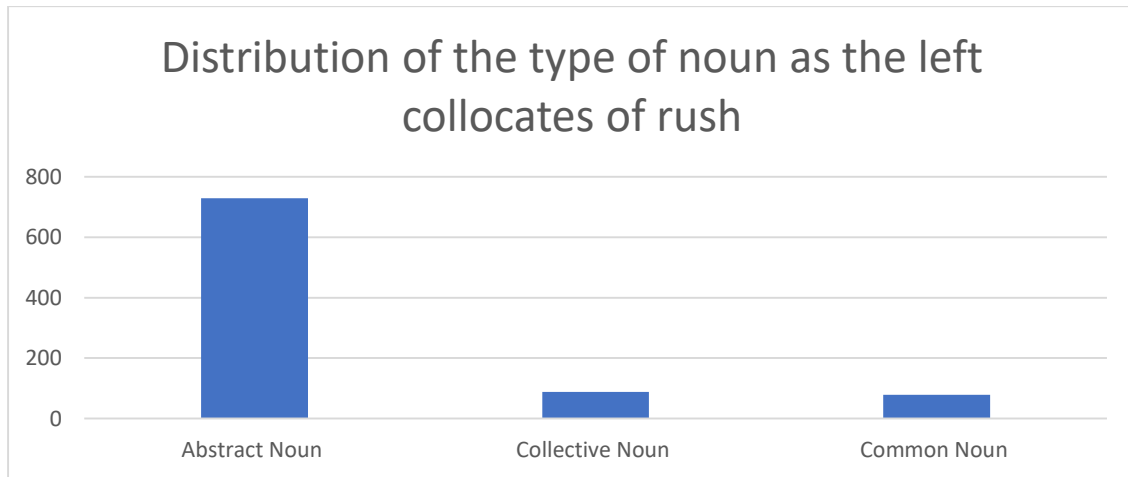


Figure 10. Distribution of the type of noun as the left collocates of rush

There are four types of nouns as the left-side noun collocates for *hurry* and three types for *rush*. The verb *hurry* and *rush* predominantly co-occur with abstract nouns as their left-sided, noun collocates. The collective noun appears the least with *hurry*, and collective and common nouns become the least for *rush*.

4.2. Noun types of the right-side collocates for *hurry* and *rush*

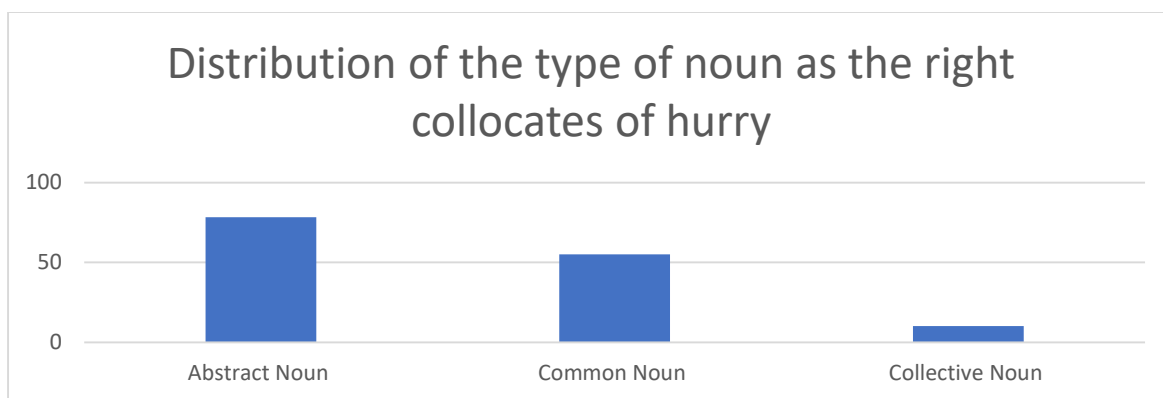


Figure 11. Distribution of the type of noun as the right collocates of hurry

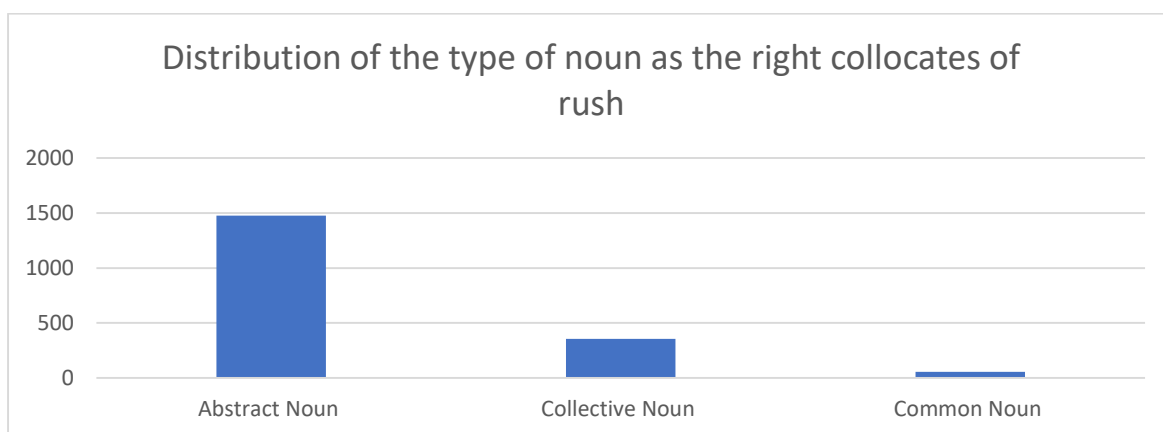


Figure 12. Distribution of the type of noun as the right collocates of rush

There are only three types of nouns collocating to the right of *hurry* and *rush*: common noun, abstract noun, and collective noun. However, the distribution of these noun types differs for each verb. The verb *hurry* most predominantly collocates with abstract nouns than with the other types of nouns. This is similar for *rush* but the common noun becomes the least predominant.

CONCLUSION

The research focused on the semantic and usage patterns of near-synonymous verbs *hurry* and *rush* based on their noun collocations identified from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). In terms of the overall frequency of their occurrences in COCA, *hurry* (with a total of 18218 appearances) is more frequent, hence more common, than *rush* (n=9,272). In terms of the semantic field categories of the collocates, *hurry* was predominantly associated with left-side noun collocates for KINSHIP and RELIGION AND BELIEF, and

EMOTIONS AND VALUE (see Figure 5). For *rush*, THE BODY, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL RELATIONS and TIME are the predominant semantics of *rush*'s left-side noun collocates (Figure 6). For the right-side noun collocates, *rush* is predominantly associated with LAW, TIME and KINSHIP (Figure 8) while *hurry* is associated with EMOTIONS AND VALUE and KINSHIP (Figure 7).

In conclusion, while synonyms have the same underlying meaning, they are not completely identical or relevant in all instances as attested in their semantic preferences based on studying large body of corpus data.

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