

Semantic Nuances Between Synonyms in English and Their Communicative Value

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Abstract:

Effective communication which is the goal of our life requires a thorough understanding of various aspects of meaning. We must convey our intended meaning. In order to do so, we must know different types of meaning of lexical items or words. A word has its connotation and denotation. We must know the basic meaning of the word and its connotative or additional meaning. Words may have their own stylistic overtones. It is imperative for all of us to know semantic differences or nuances between synonyms in English. Then we can communicate unhesitatingly, and confidently.

Keywords: nuances, denotation, connotation, affective meaning, socio-stylistic variations.

Introduction: Effective communication is an essential part of our everyday life. It is central to our speaking and writing skills. In order to convey our thoughts, concepts, desires, feelings, etc. we must communicate effectively. This effective communication involves the most appropriate use of lexical items or words. We must use lexical items appropriately and judiciously to convey the meaning which we intend to convey. But to convey the intended meanings is not an easy task because there are multifaceted dimensions of meanings of words. There are subtle differences between words called nuances in English. There are several aspects of meaning of a word. Denotation and connotation or implication are of wider significance in the arena of communicative value. We discern semantic differences between synonymous words. Having a good knowledge of these nuances is a must for us to speak and write well. We must grasp the purport of the words or expression.

Definition of Semantics: Semantics, a core branch of linguistics, is the logical and scientific study of meaning. It is central to the study of verbal communication. It, as a branch of linguistics, deals with how the meaning is conveyed by the linguistic systems consisting of different linguistic units and structures like words, phrases, etc. Different dimensions of meanings of linguistic units or forms constitute the subject matter of semantics. These meanings do not always remain stable because these depend upon speakers, hearers, or listeners and the context involved. Meaning in the narrow sense is called *sense* or conceptual meaning but in the wider sense is called *communicative value* embracing all the seven types of meaning.

Leech's Seven Types of Meaning: There are different aspects of meanings of words. According Geoffrey leech (1981), there are seven types of meaning of words. They are as follows.

1. Conceptual/Logical meaning:

This type of meaning is also called denotative/designative/cognitive/descriptive meaning. This type of meaning plays a crucial role in linguistic communication and the functioning of a language. This meaning refers to the literal meaning of a word/lexical item. For example, the word *home* means literally a shelter or a place where we live or reside. Conceptual meaning of a word can be expressed through contrastive features. For example, the word *woman* may be defined conceptually by the three features +HUMAN, +MALE, and –ADULT. These contrastive or criterial features can determine the appropriate use of the word.

2. Connotative Meaning:

Connotative meaning can be defined as “the communicative value an expression has by virtue of what it refers to, over and above its purely conceptual content.” (Leech, 1981). There are additional non-criterial properties of a word which constitute its connotative meaning. These properties include physical properties (having a head, two legs, a womb, etc.), psychological properties (weak, prone to tears, sensitive, gentle, compassionate emotional, having soft nature, having motherly instinct, etc.) and sociological properties. These sociological properties are those putative or attributed properties determined by the viewpoint of an individual or a group of people or a whole society. Connotative meaning is the additional informational of a word. It is regarded as peripheral. The connotations of a word are relatively as they vary with the passage of time. They are subject to change depending on culture, historical period and the experience of the speaker. Connotative meaning is “open-ended in the same way as our knowledge and beliefs about the universe are open-ended: any characteristic of the referent, identified subjectively or objectively may contribute to the connotative meaning of the expression which denotes it.” (Leech, 1981) In other words, the connotative meaning of a word depends on the subjective judgement of the individual. The shared common information is the basic information and the other information is additional. For example, the word *home* connotes comfort, privacy and security. The idea of ‘not alive’ can be lexically expressed in different ways, i.e. by means of different synonymous words:

- a) The rich person died.
- b) The rich person passed away.
- c) The rich person deceased
- d) The rich person kicked the bucket.
- e) The rich person went to glory

In the five sentences above, the five words/expressions convey the same denotative meaning but each word is said to have different connotation. Sentence (a) is an informal, matter-of-fact statement as the verb *die* is used by the relatives and the friends of the person. Sentence (b) is a formal statement or a newspaper report about the man’s death as the verb *pass away* is used formally. Sentence (c) is a part of a legal document as the word *decease* is used in legal affairs. Sentence(d) contains the idiomatic expression ‘kicked the bucket’, implying that it was used by one belonging to lower social strata or one having no love for the man. Sentence (e) having the phrase ‘went to glory’ implies that the harsh and shocking statement is euphemistically stated.

3. Social meaning:

Social meaning and affective meaning have to do with the two aspects of communication. The two aspects are derived from the context or situation where an utterance is produced. Social meaning is the information

expressive of the social circumstances of its use exhibiting various socio-stylistic dimensions such as *dialect* (the language of a particular geographical region e.g. India, America, etc.) , *time* (the language of the sixteenth century or seventeenth century, etc.) , *province* (the language of law or religion or science etc.) , *status*(formal or informal, archaic or obsolete or slang etc.), *modality* (the language of emails or business letters of notices or memoranda or jokes) and *singularity* (the style of Thomas Hardy, or of Rabindranath Tagore or of John Keats etc.). There are a number of aspects of language structure which reveal social meaning. They are dialect variations, stylistic variations, pronunciation, intonation etc. Synonyms differ from each other because of stylistic overtones (Leech, 1981):

<i>Steed</i> (poetic)	<i>domicile</i> (very formal, official)
<i>Horse</i> (general)	<i>residence</i> (formal)
<i>Nag</i> (slang)	<i>abode</i> (poetic)
<i>Gee-gee</i> (baby language)	<i>home</i> (general)

Leech states that “social meaning can include what has been called the illocutionary force of an utterance: for example, whether it is to be interpreted as a request, an assertion, an apology, a threat, etc.” The same utterance can express different functional meanings owing to its illocutionary force. For example, the utterance “*I haven’t got a knife*” “produced by one eating at a restaurant, has the form and meaning of an assertion but in the social context or situation it is construed as a request (*Please bring me a knife*).

4. Affective meaning:

The language we produce can express the personal feelings of the speaker, and her/his attitude to the topic being discussed or talked about by her/him. This type of feeling reflects the speaker’s personal feeling and attitude. “Affective meaning is largely a parasitic category in the sense that to express our emotions we rely upon the mediation of other categories of meaning –conceptual, connotative or stylistic.” (Leech ,1981) Affective or emotive meaning can be expressed by means of intonation and voice timbre or tone of voice. When a group of persons are speaking loudly and is disturbing the person sitting by them, the person can utter “I’m terribly sorry to interrupt, but I wonder if you would be so kind as to lower your voices a little. OR “Will you belt up?”

5. Reflected meaning:

The interconnection or relation between words the lexical level of language gives rise to this type of meaning. This type of meaning arises when a word has multiple conceptual meanings. And when one sense of a word forms part of our response to another sense. For example, in a church service, two synonymous expressions –*The comforter* and *The Holy Ghost* – refer to the Third Person of the Trinity. Though the two words are synonyms , people’s reactions to the two words uttered are different. The non-religious meanings of the words *comfort* and *ghost*. *The Comforter* sounds warm and comforting and this expression gives rise to the reaction of comfort and support on the part of the people. But *the Holy Ghost* sounds awesome and elicits the reaction of fear and awe. In this way the non-religious senses of the two synonyms are reflected in the religious senses. Again people are rather reluctant to use words with tabooed senses. The term *cock* means *rooster* or *penis*. But due to taboo contamination , the term is replaced by *rooster*.

6. Collocative Meaning :

Collocation means the habitual cooccurrence of words. “ Collocative meaning consists of the associations a word acquires on account of the meanings of words which tend to occur in its environment .” (Leech) The words *pretty* and *handsome* have the shared meaning *good-looking*. But they do not occur or combine with all nouns because of restrictions. In other words, they differ from each other by the range of nouns with which they cooccur. For example , *pretty* collocates with girl, boy, woman, flower, garden, colour, village, etc. whereas *handsome* collocates with boy, man, car, vessel, overcoat, airliner, typewriter, etc. The range may be found overlapping in some cases. For example, handsome woman, and pretty woman are acceptable though with a suggestion of a different kind of attractiveness.

7. Thematic meaning:

This type of meaning refers to “ what is communicated by the way in which a speaker or writer organizes the message, in terms of ordering, focus and emphasis. “(Leech, 1981) There are different aspects of thematic meaning.

A. Although the conceptual content of an active sentence and its passive counterpart is the same, they differ in terms of thematic meaning :

- a) Mr. Sen kicked the ball .(active)
- b) The ball was kicked by Mr. Sen.(passive)

The two sentences have different communicative values and are suggestive of different contexts. In the active sentence , the focus is on Mr. Sen , whereas in the passive, the focus is on the ball. The active sentence suggests that we know Mr. Sen but the passive sentence implies that we don't know Mr. Sen but only that someone kicked the ball.

B. “Thematic meaning is mainly a matter of choice between alternative grammatical constructions. “ (Leech) . The contrast between two grammatical constructions can be shown by means of ordering and emphasis. We can use either (a) A bird is flying in the vast sky. Or (b) There is a bird flying in the sky; either (c) The girl waited at the bus stop or (d) At the bus stop, the girl waited; either (e) I love Elizabeth most or (f) Elizabeth I love most.

C. The contrast between two grammatical constructions can be revealed by dint of lexical items or words. For example, we can use either (a) My friend owns a flat or (b) A flat belongs to my friend. Sentence (a) implies that my friend is very rich ,whereas sentence (b) implies that the flat is a well-furnished one.

D. Sometimes the differences in thematic meaning can be shown by means of stress and intonation. For example,

- (a) Riya uses an *ELECTRIC* razor.
- (b) The kind of razor that Riya uses is an electric razor.

Here the sentences have the same conceptual meaning but the difference is brought about by contrastive stress in (a) and by syntactic structure in (b). In (a) attention is drawn to the word *electric* containing new information against the known background of his using a razor. This kind of emphasis is equally shown by the different syntactic construction.

E. Stylistic differences can be shown by means of lexical items :

- (a) The lad stuck the pen in his pocket .
- (b) The lad put the pen in his pocket.

The two words *stuck* and *put* seems to be conceptual synonyms because they share the meaning “to put something inside something” But The word *stick* has the additional information of ‘doing carelessly’. Besides, *stick* is colloquial and casual ,while *put* is neutral.

Reflected meaning, collocative meaning, affective meaning, social meaning and connotative meaning share a few features because they are open-ended and variable in nature and cannot be analyzed in clear-cut and discrete terms. Hence, they are grouped under the heading of **associative meaning**. Associative meaning varies with the experience of the individual.

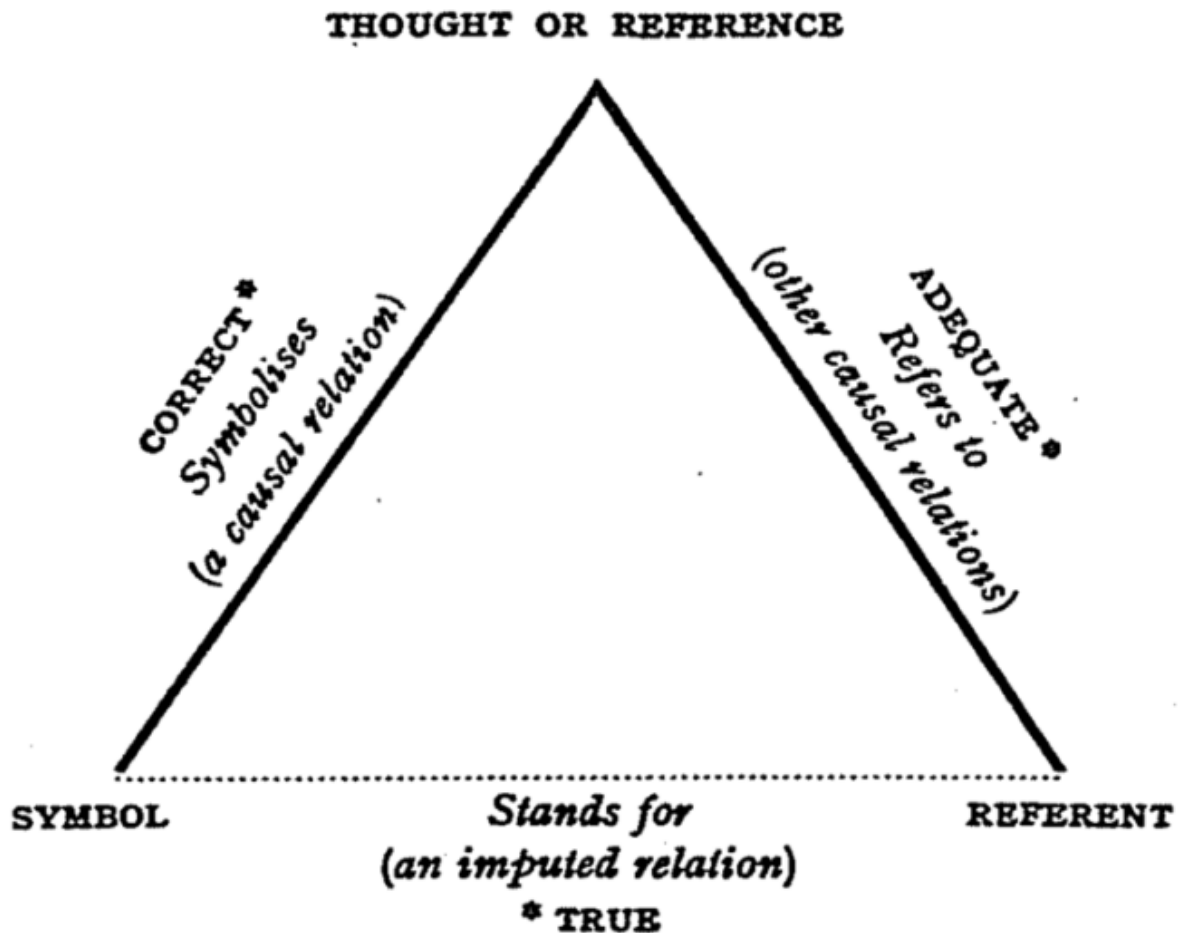
	1. CONCEPTUAL MEANING or <i>Sense</i>	Logical, cognitive, or denotative content.
ASSOCIATIVE MEANING	2. CONNOTATIVE MEANING	What is communicated by virtue of what language refers to.
	3. SOCIAL MEANING	What is communicated of the social circumstances of language use.
	4. AFFECTIVE MEANING	What is communicated of the feelings and attitudes of the speaker/writer.
	5. REFLECTED MEANING	What is communicated through association with another sense of the same expression.
	6. COLLOCATIVE MEANING	What is communicated through association with words which tend to occur in the environment of another word.
	7. THEMATIC MEANING	What is communicated by the way in which the message is organized in terms of order and emphasis.

(Leech, 1981)

Meaning Triangle:

The semantic triangle as devised by Ogden and Richards is nothing but a model of meaning demonstrating the interconnection between symbol, concept, and thing. There are three components of the semantic triangle or the basic triangle. The three components are thought or reference, symbol, and referent. Here *symbol* refers to words, *referent* refers to the things for which the words stand and *reference* refers to the feature or event we are talking about. The word symbolizes a thought. There is an indirect relation between the symbol and the referent via a thought or concept. A word can be termed a sign because it stands for something else. The thing it represents is known as reference or a thing in the real world. Words can be spoken or written. The dotted line or broken line connecting *word* and *thing* indicates that the word is not the same as the thing and that there is no direct relation between them. We perceive the only direct relationship between words and the things they represent in people’s mind. There is a direct relation between thought and the thing or referent and between thought and the word, indicated by the solid lines.

For example, when we hear the word *apple* or see the apple, it calls up a mental picture of a particular fruit in our minds. This mental picture is termed thought. It must be noted that meaning does not reside in the words. The people belonging to different culture agree to use the word when they want to talk about the thing. Thus, words are arbitrary signs. According to Zgusta, what Ogden and Richards called thought or reference is called *designatum* or *concept* or *notion*. The referent is called *denotatum* and the symbol is called *expression*.



Components of Meaning: We find three components of meaning—designation, connotation and range of application. Of the three components of lexical meaning, designative meaning or cognitive or referential meaning or denotative meaning is the basic component and connotation and the range of application are the additional components.

1. **Designation:**

It is “the relation which is existing between single words and single parts of extralinguistic world as conceived by the speakers of a particular language.” (Zgusta,1971) It refers to the relation between a sign or a word or a linguistic expression and the object in the real world. For example, the English word *cake* is designatively related to all different types of objects , which can be called cakes. Designation is an indirect relation between different words and referents or denotata via designatum. A *denotatum* (Plu. Denotata) is an actually existing object referred to by a word, sign or a linguistic expression. For example, the English word *cake* has as its denotatum the different types of cakes. The word run has as its denotatum

the different types of movements from the slowest to the fastest. *Designatum* refers to the concept or notion of denotatum conceived by the speakers of a language.

2. *Connotation:*

It is “the component of lexical meaning which adds some contrastive value to the basic usually designative value.” (Zgusta) This implies that connotation is an additional component. It is an emotional or affective component, additional to the central meaning. Connotation embraces social, expressive and stylistic meaning. Whereas the denotation of a word is its actual meaning, its connotation is which it suggests or implies in addition to its actual meaning. A word can connote subtle thoughts and emotions.

3. *Range of Application:*

It is the third component of lexical meaning. This component deals with the restriction on the range of the application. In other words, words are used in a restricted way. A word cannot combine with another word randomly. For example, words referring to the cries of animals show the restrictions on their use: the lion *roars*, the dog *barks*, the horse *neighs*, the elephant *trumpets*, the cock *crows*, the crow *caws* etc. (* the dog *neighs*, * the lion *trumpets*, * the crow *barks*, etc.). There is a subtle semantic difference between the two words *stipend* and *salary*, though both have the shared meaning “fixed sum of money paid”. Salary is paid to especially employees doing official or professional work and stipend is paid especially to priest or minister. Here we find the difference in the range of application.

Semantic differences between Words: Undoubtedly synonymous words differ from one another. The points of distinctions are revealed through implications, suggestions, connotations and applications:

1. **Synonyms:** abandon, desert, forsake, relinquish, leave, forgo.

Shared meaning: leaving behind persons, places or things completely or absolutely

Semantic nuances: *Leave* is the general term and is relatively free of the connotations which cling to the other synonyms: a man leaves one’s wife and does so openly. *Abandon* implies discontinuation of interest in some person or thing because of discouragement, distaste, weariness and the like. It also implies previous association with responsibility for or control of and surrender of something or somebody to the mercy of something or some one else. It suggests leaving finally, whether of necessity, unwilling or through shirking responsibilities. It can be applied to good and evil action, persons and things: *abandon* a hopeless task, wife, children, designs (in the sense of intentions), principles, efforts, a shipwrecked vessel to the gushing waves, a habit or trust, etc. *Desert* implies intentionally violating an oath, formal obligation or duty and violation of a legal or moral claim to allegiance or support. It suggests desolation. It implies a relationship as of occupancy or guardianship: *desert* one’s pledges, colours, post, principles, etc. *Forsake* may or may not involve culpability and implies the breaking off of association with something or someone familiar or dear. It implies a breaking off of a close association. It has emotional connotation since it implies violating obligations of affection or association: the lady *forsook* her husband for her career, *forsake* a noble cause, or one’s friends, etc. *Relinquish* implies feeling compelled to give up something which one would prefer to keep. It also implies that the thing given up is desired or desirable or is abandoned with the feeling of regret or loss: *relinquish* a long-cherished hope, one’s hope of recovery or one’s command. *Forgo* implies abstention from something already enjoyed or within reach or anticipated: *forgo* pleasure of a friend’s company, the honour of an appointment, etc.

2. **Synonyms:** able, capable, competent, qualified, adept, proficient, skillful, skilled, expert.

Shared meaning: having adequate power for doing something

Semantic nuances: *Able* implies power equal to the effort required. When followed by the infinitive, it stresses the possession of positive power, which is thought of as tending towards action. When used attributively, it implies a high degree of intellectual power or the mastery of some department of knowledge or practical affairs: able to study hard; we become able by long experience and able from natural or acquired powers. It implies power to meet or fulfill ordinary usual requirement. *Capable* lays emphasis on certain less active, often inherent qualities, which suggest rather adjustment or adaptation than latent energy. It implies adequacy to meet requirements. It implies power to meet or fulfill ordinary or usual requirements. It is stronger in indicating potential, possibly unsuspected, whether for good or ill. It stresses trained proficiency for a specific task, whereas *able* suggests a wider perspective or potential. Whereas *capable* is applied to things and animals, *able* applies only to creatures. *Competent* denotes, with an infinitive, complete fitness for the task in hand. It implies the possession of special or technical qualification. It suggests an expertise in a complicated field. It is suggestive of power to meet demands in a completely satisfactory way. *Qualified* stresses the possession of required skills and generally applied to profession or trades for which a minimum of schooling or training is required. A qualified teacher who has completed the academic training prescribed is not necessarily competent: persons are qualified for some office or station. *Proficient* implies a thorough competence because of both training and practice. *Skillful* is suggestive of having ability at a particular task. It implies showing dexterity in performance. *Skilled* implies having mastery of techniques. *Adept* implies a combination of both innate ability and learned skill. *Expert* implies having a thorough knowledge of a particular subject and her or his dexterity in performance.

3. **Synonyms:** ability, skill, faculty, talent, capacity

Shared meaning: qualification or power

Semantic nuances: *Ability* is a general word for mental power, native or acquired, enabling one to do things well: ability in math. It is the more positive term and usually suggests something to be done and the power to do it. It is used, like *capacity*, of native vigour of mind, but connotes such qualities, usually executive, as arise from training: ability to discern, to act, mentally or corporeally. It is the gift of nature and education: ability to execute. *Faculty* denotes a natural ability for a particular kind of action: a faculty of saying what he means: faculty of seeing, hearing, understanding and explaining. *Talent* means a native ability or aptitude in a special field: a talent for music. It is for some particular art, profession, and office. *Capacity* implies the receptive powers, and connotes native rather than acquired, potential and actual, aptitude and mental resources. It is the power of acquiring and holding: the capacity of a vessel. It is the gift of nature: capacity to learn. *Skill* implies performance or execution.

4. **Synonyms:** act, action, deed

Shared meaning: something done

Semantic nuances: *Action* applies especially to the doing. It refers to the process of acting. An action is a continued exertion. An action is usually regarded as occupying some time and involving more than one step. It usually lasts through some time and consists of more than one act: take action on a petition. *Act* applies to result of doing. It is single and of slight duration: an act of kindness. It refers to the thing done. An act is more frequently thought of as momentary or instantaneous, and as individual. An act is a single

exertion of power. Act and deed are both used to denote the thing that is done: a voluntary or involuntary act but a good or bad deed; the action of light or heat. **Deed** emphasizes the finished or completed quality of an act; it may imply an act of some note, good or bad: a deed of daring, an irrevocable deed.

5. **Synonyms:** admissible, permissible, allowable.

Shared meaning: capable of being allowed

Semantic nuances: **Admissible** refers primarily to ideas or propositions which it characterizes as worthy to be entertained or considered: admissible evidence, assumption or excuse. **Permissible** usually applies to conduct or action with the implication of consent or authorization: permissible practice or absence. **Allowable** implies an attitude of toleration and frequently suggests the absence of prohibition: allowable indulgence.

6. **Synonyms:** admission, admittance.

Shared meaning: right of entering

Semantic nuances: **Admittance** literally denotes 'allowing one to enter a locality or a building: no admittance, admittance to the grounds, admittance into a place or society. It is applied to a literal permission to enter some place. **Admission** is used in both a literal and figurative sense. It has acquired the figurative sense of admitting to rights, privileges, standing, membership: right of admission, admission of a disputed point, admission to the church, the admission of new words into the language. When entrance into a building or a locality carries with it certain privileges, it is used.

7. **Synonyms:** advice, counsel

Shared meaning: guidance

Semantic nuances: **Advice** implies real or pretended knowledge after professional or technical, on the part of the one who gives it and may apply to any of the affairs of life: advice regarding the choice of book, legal or medical advice. **Counsel** is the fruit of wisdom or deliberation and usually presupposes weightier occasions than advice: seek counsel in an emergency, counsel of perfection.

8. **Synonyms:** afraid, fearful, alarmed, frightened, aghast, terrified

Shared meaning: showing a state of fear or apprehension

Semantic nuances: **Afraid** implies inner apprehensive disquiet: afraid of or in the dark. In most uses, being afraid is personal, and the fear has to do with bodily harm. When used in polite discourse, it indicates mild concern: I'm afraid that I'm a bit late for my appointment. **Fearful** implies fear about an object, rather than for one's self: fearful of the consequences. It is sometimes used as a synonym for *timid*: fearful here. It may mean full of terror or dread but mean merely *apprehensive* more often—that is, anticipating danger, failure or trouble. **Alarmed** implies that the feelings are aroused through realization of some imminent or unexpected danger to oneself or others: alarmed by or about someone's illness. It implies strong feelings of fear or fright. Alarmed means suddenly and sharply afraid or frightened: alarmed by a sudden outbreak of covid 19. **Frightened** suggests a sudden access of alarm. It means shocked with sudden but short-lived fear especially that arising from apprehension of physical harm: frightened by or about accident. **Terrified** suggests the emotional reaction when one is struck with a violent, overwhelming fear: terrified by an earthquake. **Aghast** is applied to strong feelings of fear. It means afraid to the point of shock. It connotes the outward manifestation of fear and terror. [Alarm arises from announced or

impending danger. Apprehension arises from that which is expected: a cry of alarm, a spectacle of terror, a sudden fright. Apprehension of danger makes us uneasy. Alarm affects the feeling. Terror affects the understanding. Fright affects the senses.]

9. Synonyms: ancient, antiquated, antique, old-fashioned, antediluvian, venerable

Shared meaning: very old

Semantic nuances: *Ancient* implies existence or first occurrence in a distant past. It implies survival from the distant past: ancient custom. *Antiquated* connotes that something is outmoded or discredited or inappropriate to the present time: antiquated teaching methods. *Antique* suggests a curious or pleasing quality in something old: antique furniture. *Old-fashioned* may disparage something as being out of date or may approve something old as being superior: old-fashioned hat, old-fashioned courtesy. *Antediluvian* suggests that something is so antiquated and outmoded that it might have come from the time before the flood and Noah's ark: an antediluvian mode of travel. *Venerable* stresses the hoariness and dignity of great age: the family's venerable patriarch.

10. Synonyms: elderly, old, aged

Shared meaning: no longer young

Semantic nuances: *Elderly*, *aged* and *old* rise by gradation in their meaning. *Elderly* is applied to persons. One is elderly who has passed the prime of life. It is a more respectful term than *old*. *Aged* is more than elderly. It is less than *old*. It is a more respectful term than *old*. It is more commonly applied to persons. It implies extreme old age. *Old* applies to one who is far advanced in years. It is applied to both persons and things: a man old, wrinkled, faded and withered.

11. Synonyms: know, apprehend, comprehend, understand, appreciate.

Shared meaning: being aware of meanings

Semantic nuances: *Know* denotes 'to be aware of something as a fact or truth': I know that he agrees with me. He knows the basic facts of the subject. *Apprehend* denotes 'to lay hold of or catch the meaning of something. Apprehension is simply an intelligent acceptance of the idea or of the fact which a proposition enunciates. One apprehends much that one does not comprehend. One may apprehend without comprehending the idea of infinity. *Comprehend* denotes 'to know something thoroughly and to perceive its relationships to certain other ideas, facts, etc. To comprehend is to embrace or understand a thing in all its compass and extent. *Understand* means to be fully aware not only of the meaning of something but also its implications. I could comprehend all he said, but did not understand that he was joking. *Appreciate* implies a just estimation of a thing's value and it is often used in reference to what is likely to be misjudged. *Comprehend* has a more extensive meaning than *understand* or *apprehend*. To apprehend is simply to take an idea into the mind. Whatever we comprehend, we understand. one may understand a foreign language, yet it would not be proper to say that he comprehends it.

12. Synonyms: shorten, abridge, abbreviate, curtail, retrench

Shared meaning: make shorter

Semantic nuances: *Shorten* is a general term meaning to make less in extent or duration: shorten a dress, a prisoner's sentence. *Abbreviate*, *abridge* and *curtail* are the three words suggesting the methods of shortening. *Abbreviate* denotes to make shorter by omission or contraction. It implies reduction, either by

cutting off or by contraction, yet so that what remains, while no longer complete, still stands for or represents a whole: Eng for England. **Abridge** denotes to reduce in length or size by condensing, summarizing and the like: abridge a document. It expresses the reduction in compass of an object which still remains relatively complete : an abridged dictionary. **Curtail** suggests deprivation and lack of completeness because of cutting off some part : curtail an explanation. It denotes a cutting off in such fashion as to impair completeness as *goin'* for *going*. When abridge and curtail are used of rights or privileges, abridge still emphasizes the idea of reduction. **Retrench** suggests the reduction of something felt to be in excess: retrench one's expenses.

13. Synonyms: conscious, aware, cognizant

Shared meaning: having knowledge

Semantic nuances: **Conscious** implies to be aware or awakened to an inner realization of a fact, truth, a condition, etc.: conscious of an extreme weariness or of one's adequacy. It applies primarily to that which is felt as within. It, as applied to external objects, stresses the element of sensation. **Aware** lays emphasis on sense perceptions insofar as they are the object of conscious recognition: aware of the odour of tobacco. It applies to that which is perceived as without one's self: aware of the charge against him, but conscious of his innocence. **Aware**, when used of what is within, the element of perception, more or less, is detached from feeling. **Cognizant** lays emphasis on an outer recognition more on the level of reason and knowledge than on the sensory level alone: cognizant of their drawbacks, their advantages and our plans.

14. Synonyms: continual, continuous, incessant, constant, perpetual, perennial.

Shared meaning: continuing

Semantic nuances: **Continual** is that which is constantly renewed and recurring , with perhaps frequent stops or interruptions. It implies a close or unceasing succession or recurrence: continual showers, rumours, interruptions, recurrence. As applied to objects in the singular, it stresses frequently the idea of going on in time rather than, like *continuous*, that of unbroken connection or substance: continual noise. It also implies that successive recurrences are very close together, with only small breaks between them or none at all: continual misunderstanding between nations. **Continuous** implies an uninterrupted continuity or union of objects or parts: continuous series. It refers to both time and space. It emphasizes the idea that the succession is unbroken: continuous life of the universe. **Continuous** or **continued** is that which is unintermittent or uninterrupted: continuous train of thought, continued succession. **Constant** implies a uniform, persistent or standing occurrence or recurrence: constant throbbing of the engine, constant interruptions. It implies always recurring in the same way, under uniform conditions, with similar results and the like: constant repetition of the same mistakes, constant endeavors. **Incessant** implies ceaseless/uninterrupted activity: incessant cough, chattering incessantly, incessant noise. **Perpetual** implies unending repetition or lasting duration: perpetual colds, perpetual fuel of controversy, perpetual benediction or motion. Perennial adds the implication of exhaustlessness or constant renewal: perennial beauty and heroism of the homeliest human nature, perennial feeling of silent worship.

15. Synonyms: cry, weep

Shared meaning: wailing

Semantic nuances: **Cry** is the homelier term. It is more apt to stress the audible lamentation: cried bitterly. **Weep** is the more formal term. It stresses the shedding of tears.

16. Synonyms: disciple, student, pupil, scholar

Shared meaning: a person who is studying or has studied a great deal

Semantic nuances: *Student* is the general term for those in attendance at a higher institution of learning or the most general term for one who attempts to gain a set of skills or involved in studies or in devotion to a person or master.: the number of students in the college. A student is a person attending an educational institution or someone who has devoted much attention to a particular problem: a college student, a student of politics. *Pupil* suggests more of the teacher's personal care or oversight than *scholar*. A pupil is a person under the close supervision of a teacher, either because of his/her youth or of specialization in some branch of study: a grade school pupil, the pupil of a famous musician. It refers usually to one, a young person in grade school, while *student* refers to one in high school or college, demonstrating that more kindergarten pupils end up as college students than child. *Disciple* is not a true synonym for pupil or scholar. It implies personal adherence to the views or doctrines of one's master or teacher: a disciple of Socrates. A disciple is a person who follows the teachings or doctrines of a person whom he considers to be a master or authority. *Scholar* emphasizes the idea of instruction or tuition. It is also the technical term for the holder of an academic scholarship. It is applied to a person who has acquired wide erudition in some field of learning: a great Sanskrit scholar.

Teaching Implications of semantic Nuances: A good knowledge of semantic differences between synonyms and different shades of lexical meaning is a must for all learners. This would enable a learner to use words most appropriately. This would help her/him a lot to speak or write well and impressively. The learner can succeed in communicating effectively. Their knowledge would be enriched and they can apply their knowledge in appropriate social situations. This would also develop their communicative skills and writing skills. They would understand any literary texts and can grasp the literary merit of the literary texts.

Conclusion: Semantic differences between synonyms in English play a crucial role in effective communication skills. Without understanding the meanings of the lexical items, one cannot communicate well. In understanding a literary text, one must acquire a good command over different shades of meanings of words.

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