Collocation and Semantic Prosody of Synonimy in French: *magnifique* and *superbe*

Putu Weddha Savitri[1], N.L. Sutjiati Beratha[2], I Made Rajeg[3], I Gede Oeinada[4]

[1,2,3,4] Faculty of Humanities, Udayana University, Bali, Indonesia

ABSTRACT: This paper aims to find the differences of two near-synonym in French, especially in term of its collocation distribution and semantic prosody. Two French adjectives, *extraordinaire* and *remarquable* which have the same core meaning, are the object of this analysis. Corpus linguistic method was used in collecting data from French corpora in *Leipzig Corpora Collection* and *AntConc* tool was used to obtain their collocates and their frequency of occurrence. Meaning aura or semantic prosody provides knowledge about the nuances caused by each adjective in a particular context. The results of the analysis show that *magnifique* and *superbe* show many similarities in meaning because they have high colloquial similarity, but there are still differences that can be used as distinguishing aspects of the two adjectives. The semantic prosody of *magnifique* shows a very positive nuance, while *superbe* can produce positive and neutral nuances.

KEYWORDS: collocation, corpora, corpus linguistic, French adjective, near-synonym

I. INTRODUCTION

Synonymy is a linguistic phenomenon that reflects diversity in the expression of similar or adjacent meanings, but has differences in nuance, connotation, or context of use. In linguistic studies, synonymy does not only include words that have similar meanings, but also involves subtle differences that appear in specific contexts that later lead to their semantic preferences. This research will be able to prove that no word has the exact same meaning (A=B) in a language. This is in line with what Taylor (2003:265) said that basically perfect or absolute synonyms do not exist, or if they do exist then it is very rare.

As mentioned earlier, the environmental characteristics of a lexical are used to reveal many things related to its meaning and function. We can recognize a word from the other words that accompany it or what is known as collocation. Moon (2010) also mentioned that it is possible to identify the difference between synonymous words by investigating linguistic features such as genre, frequency of occurrence, patterns in sentences, and their collocation. For example, the two words synonymous with *asylum* and *refuge* have the same core meaning, namely 'shelter'. However, it was reveals that the two words do not have the same collocation, i.e. only *refuge* can collocate with the verb *take,* while *asylum* cannot replace *refuge* in this case. This shows that the two words have different distributions in their usage. Collocation, which is the relationship between words that often appear together in a text, can provide a deeper picture of word usage patterns and also can produce a meaning aura or Semantic prosody. The semantic prosody of an item is the result of the interaction between the item and its distinctive collocation. The item has no affective meaning until it is placed in the context of its distinctive collocation. This is in line with Louw (2000: 49) who argues that semantic prosody does not only connote, for him semantic prosody refers to a form of meaning that is built through the proximity of a consistent series of collocations.

Vocabulary research has undergone major changes since the introduction of corpus evidence that provides an empirical basis for determining vocabulary behavior, rather than relying solely on intuition or tradition (Sinclair, 1991). With the development of corpus linguistic methods, analysis of collocation and semantic prosody in synonymy can be carried out more systematically and quantitatively. Corpus linguistics allows for large-scale data collection from various authentic texts, so that word usage patterns can be analyzed accurately based on their frequency and distribution. This method allows researchers to see how synonymous words are used in different contexts and find unique patterns that may not be apparent in traditional analysis.

In this article, we analyzed the collocation and semantic prosody of two synonymous adjectives using two types of corpus data from the *Leipzig Corpora Collection*, news and website, and *AntConc* software as a tool used in processing those corpus data. This approach provides an empirical basis for understanding semantic differences generated through collocation and semantic prosody. The aim of this study is to explore the contextual variation that occurs in synonymous word pairs and how collocation and

semantic prosody factors play a role in shaping the unique meaning of each word. This analysis is expected to provide deeper insights into the phenomenon of synonymy and its contribution to lexical variation in language.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH METHOD

Several studies have examined synonyms in various languages. Petcharat and Phoocharoensil (2017) investigated the differences between the English adjectives "appropriate," "proper," and "suitable." Sayyed (2019) studied eight English adjectives related to "fear," and found that some were more frequently used than others and how each word has different collocation. Liu (2010) analysed behavioural profile of five near-synonym of English adverbs. Yuliawati (2014) analyzed Sundanese words meaning "woman" and their semantic prosody. These studies, despite of taking different approaches, demonstrate the importance of using corpora and corpus linguistic methods in analyzing synonyms. They highlight the importance of considering collocation, context, frequency, and other linguistic features to understand the nuances of word meaning.

This analysis used corpus method and the source of corpus text from Leipzig Corpora Collection. Leipzig Corpora as a large collection of texts (corpus) in various languages can be a source of data to study language usage patterns, word frequencies, sentence structures, and more. French corpus text was extracted to find the frequency of occurrence and its cooncordance of French adjectives *magnifique* and *superbe*. The analysis was carried out using *AntConc* which has a collocation search feature and a word frequency generator. In addition to displaying a list of collocates from keywords, *AntConc* also provides information in the form of numbers of the frequency of the occurrence of the collocates in the context on the left or right (*FreqL* and *FreqR columns*). *AntConc* also provides a value in the *'effect' column* which usually refers to a statistical measure of effect that indicates how strong or significant the relationship between the keyword and its colocates is. This helps researchers understand how strong the association or relationship of the collocates is with keywords. The collocates of each adjective extracted from *AntConc* are then categorized based on word type, especially the noun and adverbial categories because both are the closest environment of an adjective.

III. FINDINGS DAN DISCUSSION

The analysis focused on the search for the collocates of adjective *magnifique* and *superbe* with the core meaning of 'great' in French. By searching for the collocate of noun and adverb of each adjective, this can provide insight into which words are most often used in relation to a particular adjective. The two categories of words are very closely related to the use of adjectives and some of the meaning of adjectives can be obtained from their colocates. Therefore, knowing the noun colloquette and adverbs of synonymous adjectives is very beneficial to understand the correct and natural use of certain adjectives in a sentence. After that, semantic prosody analysis is carried out to obtain the nuances of meaning resulting from the appearance of adjectives in certain contexts or environments. This can be done by observing the concordance of the adjective and by looking at the environment in which the adjective is located.

3.1 Collocation and Semantic Prosody of *magnifique*

Based on the frequency of its occurrence in the text corpus, *magnifique* has higher occurrence than *superbe*, which is as many as 2756 hits in the website corpus and 753 hits in the news corpus. The acquisition of collocates from *magnifique* in *AntConc* was obtained by including all these adjective forms based on the gender and number, *magnifique* (masculine and feminine singular) and *magnifiques* (masculine and feminine plural) in the *advance search section.* Based on the search result, the noun colloquette of the *magnifique* tends to be a concrete noun and 'photo' becomes the noun collocate with the highest occurrence found in the website corpus which is a total of 167 times. Other noun collocates that refer to the same thing as *photos*, namely *portrait, image, cadre, and cliché*, also have a fairly high frequency of occurrence. These nouns can be grouped into the same group of words, namely material objects in the form of images as part of photography that can be visually observed. The concrete noun that are also often described by *magnifique* are the nouns *vue* 'sight', *paysage* 'landscape, scenery', *panorama* 'panorama', *etc* which refer to nature and its environment. This gives *magnifique* the meaning of extraordinary beautiful.

To facilitate the understanding of the noun collocate type of *magnifique* adjective, these collocates can be grouped into several groups of words that have the same semantic category, namely 1) image objects as a result of photography such as *photo, portrait, image, cadre, and cliché; 2)* landscapes or nature that present visual identities such as *paysage, vue, panorama, plage, montagne, lac, soleil; 3)* areas with a certain size such as *ville, region, pays, domaine; 4)* more specific places such as *site, parc, jardin, piscine,*

chateau, baie, demeure, endroit, pont; 5) female figures and parts of body such as *femme, modele, yeux, visage; 6)* works such as *décor*, *film, book, travail, creation, costumes, albums, ouvrage.*

With the grouping of the concrete noun, the distribution of the use of *magnifique* becomes clearer and provides an understanding that other words of the same kind category and belonging to one of the above groups of words will be qualified by *magnifique* naturally. In addition to the collocate of concrete nouns, the adjective *magnifique* also describes abstract nouns such as *coup, but, travail, talent, spectacle, soirée, journée,* and *saison.* When appearing with these collocates, there are several contextual meanings described by the *magnifique*, namely very beautiful, very good, luxurious or majestic. This is inferred from the type of collocates which is mostly a concrete noun that has features of visual beauty or aesthetic high quality so that it causes admiration.

Based on the observation of the concordance line of each colocate, especially the context and environment in which the keyword appears, it can be concluded that the semantic prosody of the *magnifique* is positive. None of the noun collocates produce negative nuances when they appear with *magnifique* adjectives because these adjectives are usually associated with high quality, excellence, significant impact, and positive evaluation. Its use evokes feelings of admiration, respect, and encouragement, making it a powerful word to express positive evaluation. An example of a positive prosody resulting from the co-occurrence of *magnifique* with several noun collocates can be seen in the following data [3-1].

Data [3-1]
*... pour vous émerveiller devant **les magnifiques paysages** portés par une ambiance sonore relaxante et naturelle.*
… to amaze you with the extraordinary scenery presented by the atmosphere with a soothing and natural sound.

Based on the data above, it can be seen that the positive nuances of the collocation of the *magnifique* with the noun *paysage* 'scenery'. In data [3-1] *paysage* is described as a natural landscape that is so beautiful and amazing that it arouses a sense of admiration. This is reinforced by the verb *emerveiller* 'admire' that appears before the keyword so that the resulting nuance is very positive. Therefore, *magnifique* provides a positive assessment or evaluation of something that visually shows very good and has high visual quality.

In addition to the noun collocaet, there are also four adverb which frequently appear with *magnifique*, namely *simplement* 'really', *vraiment* 'really', *absolument* 'very, completely', and *juste* 'really, precisely'. The use of adverbs that function to add degree to adjectives is very high in the corpus. All adverbs appear in the left-hand context of the *magnifique* so the commonly formed phrase structure is *adverb + adjective.* The fact about this is so beneficial to French learners that adverbs used before the adjective *magnifique.*

The four adverbs are classified as absolute degree or intensity adverbs, and imply the degree of quality of a noun is at a very high level. This adverb is used to describe how intense the quality of something or an action is. It is means all the adverbs here serve to affirm how extraordinary something which is explained by *magnifique*. Therefore, the semantic prosody of *magnifique* and adverb of degree is very positive. This can be seen in the example sentences found in the following concordance:

Data [3-2] (fra-fr_web_2013_1M. 932857)
*Un book **vraiment magnifique**, superbes photographies*
Sebuah portofolio yang luar biasa, foto-foto yang luar biasa

Data [3-2] shows that the adverb *vraiment* functions to affirm or emphasize how extraordinary the portfolio in question is. In other words, the speaker wants to convince the audience that the quality of the photos in the portfolio is very good or is already at an extraordinary level (more than just good). The positive nuances in the context of the sentence are getting stronger because of the *superbe* 'great' that appears after the keyword which also has the same meaning as *magnifique.*

3.2 Collocation and Semantic Prosody of *superbe*

The adjective *superbe* has two inflection forms, *superbe* (masculine/feminine singular) and *superbes* (masculine/feminine plural) which are included in the *advance search* in *AntConc*. From the two corpus text, *superbe* has 17 collocates from the news corpus, and 79 collocates from the website corpus. *Superbe* has 44 noun collocates with varying occurrence frequencies. *photo* as noun collocate on the website corpus appears most often, as many as 166 times to describe very good quality of a photo/portrait.

Superbe also has several noun collodates that are quite high in occurrence such as *modèle, book, site, galerie, vue, image,* and *panorama.* Based on the category, these noun collocates can be categorized as a concrete noun.

Similar to *magnifique,* collocates of *superbe* can be categorized into several groups of the same semantic categories, such as the following: 1) Image objects or those related to photography such as *photo, portrait, image, cadre, cliché, and photographie; 2)* landscapes and vast expanses of nature that present visual identities such as *paysage, vue, panorama; 3)* A specific region or region such as *site, region, plage, valée, endroit,' 4)* A specific place such as *a gallerie*; 5) Works such as *videos, creations, albums, travails.* These collodates show that *superbes* also tend to modify concrete nouns compared to abstract nouns. However, there are still some abstract nouns that become the collocate of the adjective *superbe* such as 1) A certain period of time such as *saison, journée, soirée; 2)* An event such as *voyage, performance, spectacle, séance, parcours, course; 3)* An action such as *frappe, coup, reprise.*

Based on the noun collocation, it was found that the semantic prosody adjective *superbe* is more positive and there are also some collocates that produce neutral nuances (can be positive or negative, depending on the context of the sentence). Here is an example of a concordance of *superbe* that have positive semantic prosody.

Data [3-3] (fra-fr_news_2013_1M.86995)
Superbe journee malgre le manque de soleil
Hari yang luar biasa meskipun kurang sinar matahari

Superbe in the data [3-3] is used to describe or evaluate *journee* 'day' that is excellent and impressive to the speaker, thus encouraging admiration. The sentence above has a positive semantic prosody because the resulting nuances are very positive. The adjective *superbe* also has a neutral semantic prosody, i.e. when it collocates with the noun *descente* 'descending', and *parcours* 'way' because the resulting meaning can have positive or negative nuances. This can be seen in the data [3-4] and [3-5] below.

Data [3-4] (fra-fr_web_2013_1M.898734)
Superbe descente *avec 1 passage très raide.*
Extraordinary descent with 1 very steep section.

Data [3-5] (fra-fr_web_2013_1M.236756)
*… est un sommet dont la particularité est d'offrir **une superbe descente** en forêt dans sa basse*
… is a peak whose peculiarity offers a magnificent descent into the forest at its bottom

From the data [3-4] it can be seen from the sentence that the nuances resulting from the collocation of the adjective *superbe* and *descente* are slightly negative because *the superbe descente* 'extraordinary descent' in question is a steep descent. Therefore, this descent is said to be extraordinary because of its steepness and it causes concern and even fear for those who pass through it. Meanwhile, in the data [3-5], the nuances produced tend to have positive nuances because the descent does not feel scary even offer extraordinary nature and forests.

Collodates with adverb categories of *superbe* are only found in the corpus of websites, i.e *vraiment* 'really' and simplement 'really' and *absolument* 'very, completely'. The frequency of *vraiment* is higher when compared to *simplement* and *absolument.* This adverb belongs to the degree adverb that indicates the level of intensity of the state described by the adjective. This adverb emphasizes how extraordinary the quality of something described by the adjective *superbe*. Therefore, the semantic prosody of the collocation of the *superbe* with its adverb is positive as can be seen in the following example:

Data [3-6] (fra-fr_web_2013_1M.909095)
*T'es **simplement superbe** dans tout ce que tu fais.*
You are truly amazing in everything you do

Data [3-6] show that *simplement* as adverb precedes *superbe*, and serves to emphasize or reaffirm that what is being described, in this case the subject of the sentence, has a quality that is at a truly great or above average level. With the adverb *simplement*, the level of greatness becomes stronger.

Based on the collocation and semantic prosodies of *magnifique* and *superbe,* it can be concluded that these two adjectives are very close synonyms because they have many similarities in noun and adverb collocates. However, the frequency of occurrence of the same collocate is not the same. By this significant difference in frequency, it can be observed that a noun or adverb will appear more naturally with *magnifique or superbe*. For example, the word *vue* 'scenery', although *magnifique* and *superbe* can both collocate with this noun, we can assume that it would be more natural to be modified by the *magnifique* considering that the collocation of *magnifique + vue* is 3 times higher than that of *the superbe*. Likewise with adverb collocates, both adjectives have the same collocate, there is only adverb 'juste' that is not found to appear with *superbe*. The comparison of the frequency of occurrence of noun collocates and adverbs of *magnifique* and *superbe* can be seen in the following diagram.
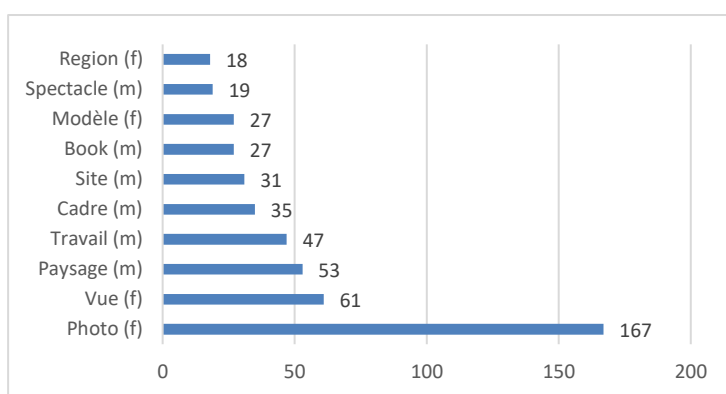
Picture 1. Noun collocates of *magnifique*
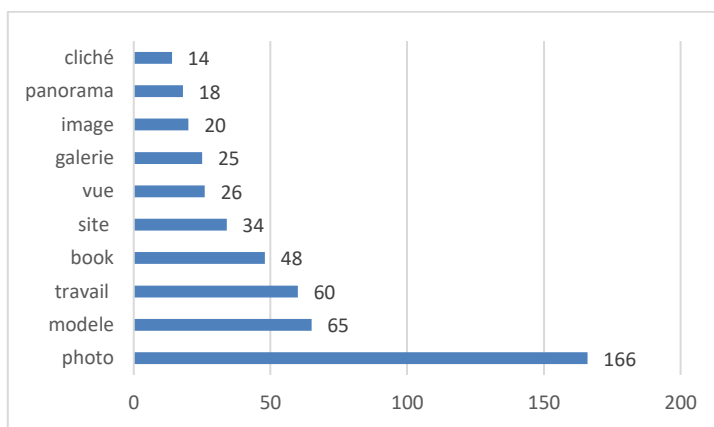
Picture 2. Noun collocates of *superbe*
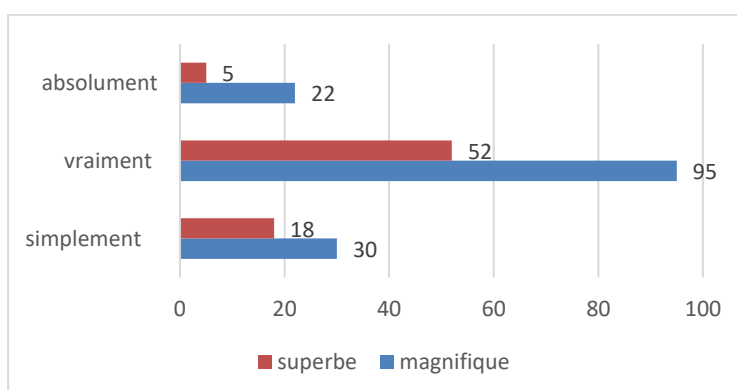
Picture 3. Adverb collocates of *magnifique* and *superbe*

From figures 1 and 2, the two adjectives appear to have the same noun collodates such as *photo, vue, modele, travail, book, site,* but with different occurrences. What is interesting is that *photo* have same high frequency of occurrence in both adjectives. From these results, it can be assumed that *magnifique* and *superbe* have the core meaning so that it can be used to describe the same collocate. Meanwhile, Figure 3 shows that although they have the same collocate of adverb, their occurrence tends to be higher with *magnifique.* Back refers to the claim that there is no absolute synonymy, it can be said that there is still a distinction of those synonymous adjectives. One of them is the emotional effect and intensity of *magnifique* and *superbe* which can be observed from the concordance of the two adjectives with the collocate *photo* which can be seen in the following data:

Data [3-7] (fra-fr_web_2013_1M.909073)
Tes photos sont vraiment magnifiques et exceptionelles
Your photos are truly incredible and amazing

Data [3-8] (fra-fr_news_2013_1M.86995)
Bravo pour ce superbe photo de lumière et de douceur, ...
Congratulations on this amazing photo full of light and softness,....

The difference in the emotional effects caused by *magnifique* and *superbe* can be seen in the two data above because both adjectives give an evaluation of *photo* that has excellent / extraordinary quality. This situation evokes emotions of admiration. However, data [3-7] show that *magnifique* cause more dramatic emotional effects due to the presence of two affirmations in the sentence. The first is the adverbial *vraiment* which further emphasizes the quality possessed by the photo so that it gets an absolute 'greatness' impression or is at a very high level. This affirmation is further strengthened by the adjective *exceptionelle* which also has an extraordinary core meaning. As for the data [3-8], the resulting emotional effects are more general and convey facts. It happens because *superbe* less intense than *magnifique* in term of showing the 'greatness' of an entity.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of collocates and semantic prosody that have been carried out, it can be concluded adjectives *magnifique* and *superbe* have many similarities in their collocation which indicate that both have the same core meaning, namely 'great'. However, the frequency of occurrence of the collocate is not the same between *magnifique* and *superbe,* for example *the* 'scenery' vue is very high with the magnifique adjective, while *the modele* is higher to be modified by *superbe*. When viewed from the semantic category of the noun, both adjectives are often used to describe something that displays high visual quality such as nature, photographic works, and people. From these collocation, the meanings of *magnifique* can be known as extraordinarily beautiful, while *superbe* means extraordinarily good. Knowing the collocates of each adjective can help in understanding the meaning based on a specific context, it shows the emotional effect and intensity of the adjective itself. *Magnifique* implies a high sense of admiration as well as dramatic, while *superbe* implies a more general sense of admiration. Meanwhile, with the high frequency of occurrence of the collocate adverb of degree along with *magnifique* , it can be assumed that *magnifique* has a higher intensity than *superbe* because *magnifique* more often gets an emphasis or affirmation of the quality described is absolute. When viewed from the semantic prosody, *magnifique* always presents positive nuances, while *superbe* produces positive and neutral nuances (can be positive or negative according to the context of the sentence).

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