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NEAR SYNONYMY ANALYSIS OF THE DESCRIPTIVE ADJECTIVE *PALE* IN ENGLISH AND *BLED*, *-A*, *-O* IN SERBIAN

Abstract

Within the extensive scientific research on descriptive adjectives and their near synonyms, we noticed the prevailing idiomatic meaning of the adjectives analyzed here. In this paper, we will apply contrastive analysis of the descriptive adjective *bled*, *-a*, *-o* in Serbian and descriptive adjective *pale* as well as their near synonyms in English and Serbian in order to prove the presence of the aforementioned descriptive adjectives' prevailing idiomatic meaning in both languages. The results of the analysis indicate that the semantic (and grammatical) aspects of words are reflected onto and within their collocational framework. Furthermore, it is expected that the collocational framework of the adjective *bled*, *-a*, *-o* in Serbian will change depending upon the grammatical gender implied (masculine, feminine, neuter), as well as on the sequence of its near synonyms. The same changes are not expected to occur in English due to its lack of grammatical gender. The methodology of the research comprises the frequency of the primary and idiomatic meaning analyses of the descriptive adjective *bled*, *-a*, *-o*, and its near synonyms based on the framework of the Contemporary Serbian language electronic corpus (Faculty of Mathematics, University of Belgrade), and the descriptive adjective *pale* and its near synonyms analyzed on the British National Corpus data (BNC) and the Words Bank: English database.

Key words: descriptive adjective, near synonyms, idiomatic meaning, grammatical gender, the most frequent collocational framework

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1. Introduction

The main purpose of this paper is to provide a specific method of near-synonymy analysis of the selected descriptive adjectives through their use, analysed within the most frequent collocational framework. The most frequent collocational framework refers to the most frequent nominal collocations of the node word (the chosen descriptive adjective and its near-synonyms).

After analyzing the first ten synonyms (extracted from the dictionaries of synonyms)[1] through their co-occurrences within the most frequent nominal collocations (corpus-based analysis) of the node word, four synonyms were considered to be near synonyms of the selected descriptive adjective.

Words are rather close in meaning, similar but not identical, not completely interchangeable varying in their nuances of denotation, connotation, implication, emphasis or register (DiMarco, Hirst and Stede 1993). These words are called near-synonyms (or plesionysms) (Cruse 1986).

Cruse (1986: 270) claims that "natural languages abhor absolute synonyms just as nature abhors vacuum", as the meanings of words are constantly changing. Clark (1992: 271) displays her principle of contrast, stating that "every two forms contrast in meaning", supporting the previous contention related to the natural elimination of absolute synonymy in languages.

Cruse (1986) differentiates cognitive synonyms and plesionyms; cognitive synonyms are words that, when inter-substituted in a sentence, preserve its truth conditions but may change the expressive meaning, style or register of the sentence (e.g. *violin : fiddle; misty : foggy*) (Edmonds and Hirst 2002: 115–116).

However, Edmonds and Hirst (2002) oppose such coarse-grained definitions of plesyonisms and cognitive synonyms, claiming that definitions of near-synonymy that do not take granularity into account are insufficient. Having taken granularity into account, we can create a much more useful definition of near-synonymy, because we can now characterize the difference between essential and peripheral aspects of meaning (Edmonds and Hirst 2002: 117).

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[1] Ćosić 2008 and Words Bank: English database.

Murphy states that synonymy and similarity are firstly described from the author's meta-lexical perspective, thus being considered "a relation between our conceptualizations of words, rather than between their lexical entries [in the mental lexicon]" (Murphy 2003: 134). She claims a synonym ensemble "includes only word-concepts that have all the same contextually relevant properties, but differ in form" (Murphy 2003: 134).

Though collocations can often be unexpected, they are of the utmost importance regarding the lexical structure of the language and therefore they tend to be recurrent. Sinclair (1991: 170) defined collocations as "the occurrence of two or more words within a short space of each other in a text" and suggested a span of four to five words on either side of the node (Sinclair 1966: 105–106). Sinclair advocated a *statistically oriented approach* in the mid 1960s, as he was the first to regard computer-based corpora as a very useful tool for analysing collocations (Sinclair 1966: 428). While pointing out drawbacks of the introspective approach he stated that "patterns perceived by a trained linguist examining a text are unreliable and usually extremely tentative" (Sinclair 1966: 413).

Consequently, a great number of synonymy analyses are context-dependent, being focused on collecting data on contextual factors that substantially differentiate semantic nuances among words sharing a similar denotation, as well as on objective factors that determine which word within a group is selected for a certain context. This line of scientific research represents a complete reversal of the traditional introspective approach and such concepts as the synonymy span of use (Zgusta 1971).

2. Methodology and goals

The majority of semanticists claim that absolute synonymy is rare, while in the opinion of certain linguists it is in fact non-existent (Quine (1951); Palmer (1976: 59)). Hence, it is possible to conduct research into near synonymy within their collocational framework.

The corpus of the analysis consists of the descriptive adjective *bled, -a, -o* in Serbian and the descriptive adjective *pale* in English. The results of the analysis should prove the starting hypothesis of this paper claiming that the collocational framework is a better generator of the precise meaning of a word than its denotation. Accordingly, these results will indicate findings that the semantic (and grammatical) aspects of words are reflected onto

and within their own collocational framework. Furthermore, it is expected that the collocational framework of the adjective *bled, -a, -o* in Serbian will change depending on the grammatical gender implied (masculine, feminine, neuter), as well as the sequence of its near synonyms. Consequently, it is claimed that there are inflectional selectional differences among synonyms in a morphologically rich language such as Serbian. These findings are in accordance with the cognitive approach to meaning where it is deemed to be a fluid category prone to changes and adjustments in every utterance and written record supplied. Therefore, the idiosyncrasies of these two contrasted languages will be indicated in relation to the presence of grammatical gender in Serbian and its lack in English.

The methodological diversity of this approach features the use of the collocational method (Hlebec 2008a; Hlebec 2008b; Hlebec 2008c; Hlebec 2011; Hlebec 2012), followed by a componential analysis of the collocates of the extracted descriptive adjectives and, then, as the final step of the research, applying contrastive analysis. The very process of contrasting (or analysing) presupposes the comparison of nominal collocates of descriptive adjectives, not the comparison of descriptive adjectives in isolation.

This approach is, though only partially, in accordance with the collocational method originally applied by Hlebec (2011). Hlebec (2011: 122) elaborates the specificity of the collocational approach through the analysis of the descriptive adjective *wild*.

We have to emphasize that there are certain differences regarding the collocational method we have devised for the puropses of this paper compared to the collocational method originally presented by Hlebec. Namely, in his collocational method, Hlebec insists on an exhaustive polysemantic account of the lexeme analysed whereas we have focused only on the most frequent collocational framework of the lexeme which, to a certain extent, restricts the number of possible meanings of the lexeme under analysis.

As one of the precursors of the collocational approach to semantic word analysis, Palmer (1976: 76) quotes Firth, who claims: "you shall know the word by the company it keeps" (Firth 1957: 11) emphasizing the importance of the collocational framework to word analysis.

The process of contrasting (or analysing) presupposes the comparison of nominal collocates of descriptive adjectives, not the comparison of descriptive adjectives in isolation. For the analysis of synonyms within the most frequent collocational framework electronic dictionaries and

electronic databases are used, such as the corpus of the contemporary Serbian language, Faculty of Mathematics, University of Belgrade, the British National Corpus (BNC) and the Words Bank: English database.

A great number of researchers have used the Internet as a corpus for analysis. Inkpen (2004) used the Internet as a corpus when devising the statistical model for near synonymy choice. Grefenstette (1999) used the web for machine translation analysis; Kilgariff (2001) analysed different noises by using web data; Mihalcea and Moldovan (1999) as well as Agirre and Martinez (2000) used the web as an additional source for analysing nuances in meaning among different words; Resnik (1999) used the web for bilingual texts' analysis. Keller and Lapata (2003) showed that web data are aligned with other relevant corpus data.

While relying on the usage-based semantics and applying corpus-driven semantic analysis a specific corpus-driven semantic methodology has been devised in this investigation in an attempt to answer the questions: "How can highly similar lexemes be differentiated from each other and how can their similarity be measured?" These are the same questions made by Divjak (2010) at the beginning of the near-synonymy research within which a clustered model for near-synonymy was presented. Divjak and Gries (Divjak 2006; Divjak and Gries 2006, Divjak and Gries 2008) tagged 87 variables (morphosyntactic, syntactic and semantic) in order to establish the behavioural profiles of Russian verbs meaning try and calculate the "distances" among near-synonyms.

Synonyms have been the focus of attention in the use of behavioural profiles (Atkins 1987; Hanks 1996), which can combine a variety of types of information, not limited to collocational and syntactic preferences. Geeraerts (1998) pioneered synonymy research in cognitive linguistics, comparing 19th century uses of two Dutch verbs meaning destroy. Geeraerts' study incorporates collocational, constructional, semantic and metaphorical data and uses corpus data to corroborate introspective analyses found in synonym dictionaries.

Glynn (2011) carried out a case study in polysemy. This study introduces quantitative corpus methods for Cognitive Linguistics whose usage-based model permits conceptual analysis based on corpus data. By assuming that grammar is a result of repeated use (entrenchment), one can examine patterns of use in large amounts of language in order to 'map' its grammar (conceptual structure). Examining the English lexeme *hassle*,

the case study presents one method for such analysis and applies it to the interaction of morpho-syntactic and lexical semantics (2011: 185).

The aim of our research is to show the dominant presence of the idiomatic meaning of the contrasted descriptive adjectives and their near synonyms in English and Serbian. Furthermore, it is expected that the collocational framework of the adjective *bled, -a, -o* in Serbian will change with the grammatical gender implied (masculine, feminine, neuter), as will the sequence of its near synonyms. Consequently, we claim that there are inflectional selectional differences among synonyms in a morphologically rich language such as Serbian. On the other hand, our results show that the same changes do not occur within the analysis applied to the English language, due to its lack of grammatical gender.

In the end we expect that the results of the analysis will shed light on grammatical gender in Serbian as an influential generator of the extensions of meaning.

3. Analysis of descriptive adjective and their near synonyms in Serbian: the descriptive adjective *bled*, *-a*, *-o*

The following four synonyms can be considered to be the near synonyms of the descriptive adjective *bled*: *bledunjav, anemičan, beskrvan, avetinjski,* after having analyzed the first ten synonyms (extracted from the dictionary of synonyms: *Rečnik sinonima*, Pavle Ćosić et al. (2008: 293)) through their co-occurrences within the most frequent nominal collocations of the node word *bled*.

The most frequent four collocates of the descriptive adjective *bled* analysed on the corpus data of the Contemporary Serbian language of the Faculty of Mathematics in Belgrade

	Utisak	*Čovek*	*Primer*	*Izgovor*	
Descriptive adjective	Concordance number of the collocates analysed on the corpus data of Google Search				Total number of concordances for the given examples
Bled	626	740	4	4	1374
Near-synonymy samples of the adjective bled					
Anemičan	3	1		/	4
Beskrvan	/	3		/	3
Bledunjav	193	9		/	202
Avetinjski	2	/		/	2

Table 1. Near-synonymy samples of the adjective *bled*

Sun, Huang and Liu (2011) in their near synonymy analysis point out that it is enough to extract four collocations in order to avoid all existent collocations' analysis entirely. Consequently, we have decided to restrict the analysis to four most frequent collocations, thus trying to get as valid results as possible.

Piits (2013) confirms the hypothesis that the existence of mutual collocations of the selected node words implies the following semantic relations: synonymy, antonymy, hyperonymy. Using the Estonian language corpus analysis, they collected 30 most frequent words left and right from the node word by applying the WordSmith Tools programme. Hence, we have analysed collocations to the right side from the node word as we focused on descriptive adjective analysis.

The next step was the frequency analysis of the four most recurrent collocates of the adjective *bled* (~*utisak*, ~*čovek*, ~*primer*, ~*izgovor*) which was carried out within the collocational framework of the suggested near

synonyms (*bledunjav, anemičan, beskrvan, avetinjski*) (see Table 1). Having examined the results, we can conclude that the near synonyms of the adjective *bled* are: *bledunjav* (202), *anemičan* (4), *beskrvan* (3), *avetinjski* (2).[2] The semantic component of the seme *bled* is *weak, insufficient* with three collocates having an idiomatic meaning (*utisak, primer, izgovor*) (Eng. ~*impression,* ~*example,* ~*excuse,*) and one nominal collocate having a concrete meaning (*čovek*) (Eng. *man*) referring to *being whitish in complexion*.

The most frequent four collocates of the descriptive adjective *bleda*
analysed on the corpus data of the Contemporary Serbian language
of the Faculty of Mathematics in Belgrade

	Senka	*Kopija*	*Svetlost*	*Slika*	
Descriptive adjective	Concordance number of the collocates analysed on the corpus data of Google Search				Total number of concordances for the given examples
Bleda	**6560**	**38100**	**1660**	**25300**	**71620**
Near-synonymy samples of the adjective *bleda*					
Anemična	/	111	4	9	124
Beskrvna	1	3	1	5	10
Bledunjava	/	/	6	10	16
Avetinjska	1	3	/	5	9

Table 2. Near-synonymy samples of the adjective *bleda*

The third stage of the research includes frequency analysis of the four most recurrent collocates of the adjective *bleda* (~*senka,* ~*kopija,* ~*svetlost,* ~*slika*) (Eng. ~*shadow,* ~*copy,* ~*light,* ~*picture)* within the collocational framework of the suggested near synonyms (*bledunjava, anemična,*

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[2]   Taken from www.google.com *pages from Serbia* (2 December 2013).

avetinjska, beskrvna) (see table 2). The results of the analysis suggest that the near synonyms of the adjective *bleda* are: *anemična* (124), *bledunjava* (16), *beskrvna* (10), *avetinjska* (9).[3] The mutual semantic content of the seme *bleda* would be *weak, insufficient* (Table 2).

The most frequent four collocates of the descriptive adjective *bledo* analysed on the corpus data of the Contemporary Serbian language of the Faculty of Mathematics in Belgrade

	Lice	*Čelo*	*Svetlo*	*Dete*	
Descriptive adjective	Concordance number of the collocates analysed on the corpus data of Google Search				Total number of concordances for the given examples
Bledo	**17100**	**1120**	**4460**	**323**	**23003**
Near-synonymy samples of the adjective *bleda*					
Anemično	**637**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**641**
Beskrvno	**10**	**/**	**3**	**109**	**122**
Bledunjavo	**154**	**/**	**5**	**/**	**159**
Avetinjsko	**328**	**3**	**3**	**/**	**334**

Table 3. Near-synonymy samples of the adjective *bledo*

The final stage of the research involves frequency analysis of the four most recurrent collocates of the adjective *bledo* (~*lice, ~čelo, ~svetlo, ~dete*) (~*face, ~forehead, ~light, ~child*) within the collocational framework of the suggested near synonyms (*bledunjavo, beskrvno, avetinjsko, anemično*) (see Table 3). The results of the analysis suggest that the near synonyms of the adjective *bledo* are: *anemično* (641), *avetinjsko* (334), *bledunjavo* (159),

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[3] Taken from *www.google.com pages from Serbia* (2 December 2013).

beskrvno (122).[4] The overall semantic content of the seme *bledo* would be (~*lice, ~čelo, ~svetlo, ~dete*) (Table 3).

3.1. Analysis of the descriptive adjective *pale* in English

The most frequent four collocates of the descriptive adjective *pale* analysed on the corpus data of following website: www.justtheword.com

	Face	*Skin*	*Eye*	*Light*	
Descriptive adjective	Concordance number of the collocates analysed on the corpus data of Google Search				Total number of concordances for the given examples
Pale	**289**	**255**	**141**	**100**	**785**
Near-synonymy samples of the adjective bleda					
Ashen	48	31	1	2	82
Pallid	25	11	/	7	43
Livid	6	21	1	3	31
Wan	14	/	1	6	21

Table 4. Near-synonymy samples of the adjective *pale*

A frequency analysis of the four most recurrent collocates of the adjective *pale* (*face, skin, eye, light*) was carried out within the collocational framework of the suggested near synonyms (*ashen, pallid, livid, wan*) (see Table 4). The results of the analysis suggest that the near synonyms of the adjective *pale* are: *ashen* (82), *pallid* (43), *livid* (31), and *wan* (21)[5]. The implied semantic content of the seme *pale* would be *weak* (*light*), *being whitish in complexion* (*face, skin*) and *having a light hue of a colour* (*eye*) (*face, skin, eye, light*) (Table 4).

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[4] Taken from *www.google.com* pages from Serbia (2 December 2013).

[5] Taken from *www.WordBanksOnline: English* (2 December 2013).

3.2. Componential analysis

Further research comprises of the componential analysis of the descriptive adjective *bled, -a, -o* and its near synonyms *anemičan, -a, -o, beskrvan, -a, -o, bledunjav, -a, -o, avetinjski, -a, -o*. Throughout this analysis we intend to distinguish the semantic features of the abovementioned adjective and its near synonyms, which is why we have analyzed them in the selected collocational framework (the most frequent collocates of the adjective *bled, -a, -o* are as follows: *utisak, primer, čovek, izgovor, senka, kopija, svetlost, slika, lice, čelo, svetlo, dete*).

Componential analysis includes the descriptive adjective *pale,* as well as its near synonyms: *ashen, pallid, livid, wan.* The descriptive adjective *pale* and its near synonyms have been analyzed in the collocational framework of the adjective *pale* (*face, skin, eye, light*).

3.3. Contrastive analysis

In the process of contrastive analysis application we have undertaken a comparison of the semantic features of the adjective *bled, -a, -o* and its near synonyms (*bledunjav, anemičan, beskrvan, avetinjski*) according to the frequency of their most recurrent collocates (*utisak, čovek, primer, izgovor, senka, kopija, svetlost, slika, lice, čelo, svetlo, dan*); (*impression, man, example, excuse, shadow, copy, light, picture, face, forehead, day*).

3.4. The most frequent semantic features of the adjective *bled, -a, -o* in Serbian and the adjective *pale* in English

The most frequent semantic features of the adjective *bled, -a, -o* in Serbian and the adjective *pale* in English as well as their near synonyms analyzed in the range of their most frequent collocates, are:

a) the most frequent semantic components of the adjective *bled* and its near synonyms (*bledunjav, anemičan, beskrvan, avetinjski*) analysed in the following collocational framework (*dan, način, primer, izgled*)

[+MALE±ANIMATE±ADULT]

[+SLAB] 7: Eng. [+WEAK] 7

b) the most frequent semantic components of the adjective *bleda* and its near synonyms (*bledunjava, anemična, beskrvna, avetinjska*) analysed within the given collocational framework (*senka, kopija, svetlost, slika*):
[-MALE±ANIMATE±ADULT]
[+SLABA] 9: Eng. [+WEAK] 7

c) the most frequent semantic components of the adjective *bledo* and its near synoyms (*bledunjavo, anemično, beskrvno, avetinjsko*) analysed in the range of the following collocates (*lice, čelo, svetlo, dete*) :
[±MALE±ANIMATE±ADULT]
[+NEDOVOLJNA PROKRVLJENOST] 12 : Eng. [+LACKING BLOOD] 12

d) the most frequent semantic components of the adjective *pale* and its near synonyms (*ashen, pallid, livid, wan*) analyzed in the following collocational framework: *face, skin, eye, light.*
[-MALE±ANIMATE±ADULT]
[+MODRO] 3: Eng. [+LIVID] 3

At the same time, the most frequent semantic components of the adjective *bled, -a, -o* in Serbian and the adjective *pale* in English are as follows:
[-MALE±ANIMATE±ADULT]
[+NEDOVOLJNA PROKRVLJENOST] : Eng. [+LACKING BLOOD]
[+SLABO]: Eng. [+WEAK]

Further analysis includes the most frequent collocates of the descriptive adjective *pale* near synonyms collected from the British National Corpus (112,181,015) (Table 5). Their common collocates have been written in bold letters:

ASHEN	**FACE** (11)	COLOUR (2)	**CHEEK** (1)	**COMPLEXION** (1)
PALLID	**COMPLEXION** (7)	**CHEEK** (5)	HUE (2)	WHITE (2)
LIVID	BRUISE (3)	SCAR (2)	SCRATCH (2)	FURY (2)
WAN	SMILE (15)	SUNLIGHT (1)	GHOST (1)	HUMOUR (1)
PALE	**FACE** (166)	GREEN (77)	SKIN (57)	COLOUR (50)

Table 5. The most frequent collocates of the descriptive adjective *pale*
near synonyms collected from the British National Corpus (112,181,015)

The common collocates of the descriptive adjective *pale* near synonyms
(Table 5) are:
    ashen/pale face
    ashen/pallid cheek
    ashen/pallid complexion

Out of the most frequent collocates of the descriptive adjective *pale* and
its near synonyms, the following ones have a transferred meaning (Table 5):
    ashen colour
    pallid hue/white
    livid bruise/scar/scratch/fury
    wan smile/sunlight/ghost/humour
    pale green/colour

A similar analysis has been carried out regarding the most frequent
collocates of the near synonym *bled, -a, -o* (*bledunjav, -a, -o, anemičan,
-a, -o, beskrvan, -a, -o, avetinjski, -a, -o*) endorsing the corpus data of the
Contemporary Serbian language, Faculty of Mathematics, University of
Belgrade (113,000,000) (Table 6).

BLEDUNJAV	TRAG (1)	SJAJ (1)	NAČIN (1)	/
ANEMIČAN	RAST (1)	/	/	/
BESKRVAN	/	/	/	/
AVETINJSKI	SVET (1)	PROPLANAK (1)		
BLED	UTISAK (11)	ČOVEK (5)	PRIMER (1)	IZGOVOR (1)
BLEDUNJAVA	**SVETLOST (2)**	SLOVA (1)	PEĆ (1)	FIGURINA (1)
ANEMIČNA	OSOBA (1)	KAMPANJA (1)	IGRA (1)	/
BESKRVNA	ŽRTVA (14)	/	/	/
AVETINJSKA	SVETLOST (3)	FIGURA (3)	PUSTOŠ (2)	MUZIKA (1)

BLEDA	KOPIJA (23)	SLIKA (11)	SENKA (10)	**SVETLOST (10)**
BLEDUNJAVO	ZELENILO (1)	SUNCE (1)	**LICE (1)**	/
ANEMIČNO	DRUŠTVO (1)	/	/	/
BESKRVNO	TELO (1)	**LICE (2)**	/	/
AVETINJSKO	**LICE (1)**	PRIVIĐENJE (1)	BLEDILO (1)	POREKLO (1)
BLEDO	**LICE (51)**	ČELO (7)	SVETLO (3)	DETE (1)

Table 6. The most frequent collocates of the near synonym *bled, -a, -o*
(*bledunjav, -a, -o, anemičan, -a, -o, beskrvan, -a, -o, avetinjski, -a, -o*)
endorsing the corpus data of the Contemporary Serbian language,
Faculty of Mathematics, University of Belgrade (113,000,000)

The common collocates of the descriptive adjective *bled, -a, -o* near synonyms are (Table 6):

bledunjava/avetinjska/bleda svetlost (Eng. pale/ghostly/pale light)
bledunjavo/beskrvno/avetinjsko/bledo lice (Eng. pale/bloodless/ghostly/ pale face)

Among the most frequent collocates, the following ones have transferred meaning: (26) (see Table 6):

bledunjav trag/način (Eng. pale trace/way)
anemičan rast (Eng. anemic growth)
avetinjski svet/proplanak (Eng. ghostly world/glade)
bled utisak/primer/izgovor (Eng. pale impression/example/excuse)
bledunjava svetlost/figurina (Eng. pale light/figurine)
anemična kampanja/igra (Eng. anemic campaign/play)
avetinjska svetlost/figura/pustoš/muzika (Eng. unearthly glow/figures/ havoc/music)
bleda kopija/senka/svetlost (Eng. pale copy/shadow/light)
bledunjavo zelenilo/sunce (Eng. pale greenery/sun)
anemično društvo (Eng. anemic company)
avetinjsko priviđenje/bljedilo/poreklo (Eng. ghostly apparition/pale/ sourcing)
bledo svetlo (Eng. pale light)

The stated samples of collocates indicate a metaphorical and metonymic meaning extension of the adjective *bled, -a, -o* and its near synonyms when analysed in the most frequent collocational framework.

Metaphor and metonymy are significant sources of extension of meaning (Szathmáry 2001). Metaphorical extensions of meaning have been researched by Persson (1989) in his analysis of differences in meaning between the near synonyms *deep* and *profound*. It has been concluded that these adjectives have different meaning when analysed in different collocational frameworks. *Deep* collocates with the words expressing affection, conviction, feelings, sorrow, satisfaction, regrets and the like, whereas *profound* collocates with the words expressing distaste, failure, influence and so on. Bearing in mind their metaphorical meaning, they may imply either position on the one hand or depth on the other. Only *deep* contains the metaphor of position, while depth can be expressed by both terms.

4. Conclusion

The interdisciplinary approach to the research presented in this paper incorporates the collocational method (Hlebec 2008; Hlebec 2012), as well as componential analysis of the extracted collocates of the adjectives and the semantic content of their near synonyms in the English and Serbian languages.

The first significant result of the method concerns the specific method of selecting near synonyms. The following valid result of the analysis highlights the influence of the grammatical gender (male, female, neuter) on the various most frequent collocates of the analysed descriptive adjective, when seen from the perspective of each gender.

For example:

bled: utisak (626); *čovek* (740); *primer* (4); *izgovor* (4) (Table 1)
bleda: senka (6560); *kopija* (38100); *svetlost* (1660); *slika* (25300) (Table 2)
bledo: lice (17100); *čelo* (1120); *svetlo* (4460); *dete* (323) (Table 3)

Besides the influence of the most frequent collocational framework of the adjective on the choice of its near synonyms, we found out that this interrelation depends on the adjective's grammatical gender and also on the choice of near synonyms, especially regarding the near synonyms proximity-of-meaning order.

Namely, we discovered that this proximity-of-meaning order of near synonyms varies with the gender implied (masculine, feminine, neuter):

For example:
- Near synonyms of the adjective *bled* are: *bledunjav (202), anemičan (4), beskrvan (3), avetinjski (2)*
- Near synonyms of the adjective *bleda* are: *anemična (124), bledunjava (16), beskrvna (10), avetinjska (9)*
- Near synonyms of the adjective *bledo* are: *anemično (641), avetinjsko (334), bledunjavo (159), beskrvno (122)*

The same interrelation between the word order of near proximity-of-meaning synonyms and grammatical gender in Serbian is not noticeably present in the English language, presumably because grammatical gender does not exist in English (Čarapić 2015: 385).

The results of the research are in accordance with the starting hypothesis that a collocational framework defines the meaning of a word more precisely than the very denotation of the same word. Consequently, the findings of the research imply that the semantic (and grammatical) aspects of a word are reflected in their collocational framework, which confirms and constitutes the basis of the cognitive approach to the study of meaning. Therefore, we shed light on the similarities and idiosyncrasies of these two contrasted languages, bearing in mind the presence of the grammatical gender in Serbian and its lack in English.

Boroditsky and Phillips (2002) carried out research displaying that the arbitrary designation of a noun as masculine or feminine can have an effect on how people think about things in the world. Having taken into account the many ways in which languages differ, these findings suggest that the private mental lives of people who speak different languages may differ much more than previously thought (Boroditsky and Phillips 2002: 80). In this respect, the importance of the research lies in emphasizing the disparity between the English and Serbian language in the issues of grammatical gender. These differences can have a substantial number of consequences in the processes of translating and using English and Serbian as a second language. Pointing out these differences can improve the quality of translating and of spoken English and Serbian as a second language.

We can conclude that besides *lacking blood* as a basic denotation of meaning, this adjective and its near synonyms imply other nuances of meaning, such as other types of deficiency (lack of intensity of colour (*trace, light), impression,* efficiency (*campaign*), *vivacity (solitariness/ music*)). According to Apresjan (1995) one of the most productive ways of creating synonyms comes out of *secondary meanings of lexemes,* i.e.

their metaphorical and metonymic meanings. The secondary meaning of a lexeme can be synonymous with a primary or a secondary meaning of another lexeme (lexemes *zlato (gold)* and *anđeo (angel)* can be contextual synonyms if in their secondary meanings they denote and refer to *dete (child)* (Dragićević 2010).

Analysis of the descriptive adjective and its near synonyms carried out within the most frequent collocational framework reveals a great number of samples implying idiomatic meanings in English and Serbian. The stated result is in line with the conclusions drawn by Dragićević (2010: 156) that: "the meaning of the lexemes is determined and shaped by the context, thus each new context features new semantic components of the lexeme, while the other components are shadowed." Therefore, this result proves the starting hypothesis that the collocational framework of the lexeme determines the meaning of the lexeme with more precision than its denotational meaning does, highlighting the flexible and dynamic nature of word meaning as well as the importance of metaphor, being the basis of that flexibility.

Metaphorical extensions of meaning were researched by Persson (1989) in his analysis of the differences in meaning between the near synonyms *deep* and *profound*. It was concluded that these adjectives have a different meaning when analysed in a different collocational framework. *Deep* collocates with the words expressing affection, conviction, feelings, sorrow, satisfaction, regrets and so on whereas *profound* collocates with the words expressing distaste, failure, influence and the like. Bearing in mind their metaphorical meaning they may imply either position on the one hand or depth on the other. Only *deep* contains the metaphor of position, while depth can be expressed by both terms.

The results of the analysis can be linked up to the findings of Šarić (2011) who emphasizes that the cognitive approach to linguistic analysis is encyclopaedic and as such it differs from the theory viewing meaning from the structuralist approach to this issue, which is similar to the way dictionaries deal with it.

In contrast to Structuralism, there is no distinction between semantics and pragmatics. Meaning is understood as all that one knows about the world. This 'encyclopaedic semantics' is foundational to Cognitive Linguistics and its impact upon analysis cannot be underestimated. To appreciate the importance of the assumption, it can be rephrased – meaning is how people use words in context (Glynn and Robinson 2001: 185).

179

In order to make these differences in meaning more transparent in the area of lexicography by applying this method within the forthcoming thesauri of English and Serbian, it would undoubtedly improve their quality, taking into account the obvious lack of presentation of the nuances in meaning among the given synonyms of the selected node word. At present, synonyms in the English and Serbian thesauri are listed either in alphabetical order or randomly without paying attention to their proximity in meaning.

To clarify, it has been proposed that a list of synonyms is included next to the node word following the principle of proximity of meaning, not randomly or alphabetically. More precisely, the most frequent collocational framework of the node word should be extracted, within which the near-synonymy samples should be analysed, thus measuring their proximity of meaning to the node word. Moreover, alongside the suggested method, the use of synonyms within the sentence should be added, commenting on the nuances of their meaning within the context. In addition, as only adjectives in male gender are stated in Serbian dictionaries of synonyms and there is no insight into the specific semantic features of adjectives in female and neuter gender, these samples of the adjective analysed should be included.

In conclusion, we can agree with Hallig and Wartburg (1963) that a major motivation for the onomasiological approach is the fact that alphabetic lists of words conceal the semantic and conceptual structures of languages (cf. Blank 2003: 45). This research represents a modest contribution to the field of onomasiological analysis which now builds the fundament of modern cognitive semantics (Geeraerts 1993: 648).

Bearing in mind the results of the analysis, indicating a multi-layered morphological features of the adjective *bled, -a, -o* in Serbian and its near synonyms (*bledunjav, -a, -o, anemičan, -a, -o, beskrvan, -a, -o, avetinjski, -a, -o*) we can conclude, thus confirming the starting hypothesis, that grammatical gender generates extension of meaning in Serbian to a greater extent (26)[6] compared to analysis of its English counterpart *pale*

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[6] *bledunjav trag/način (*Eng. *pale trace/way)*
    *anemičan rast (*Eng. *anemic growth)*
    *avetinjski svet/proplanak (*Eng. *ghostly world/glade)*
    *bled utisak/primer/izgovor (*Eng. *pale impression/example/excuse)*
    *bledunjava svetlost/figurina (*Eng. *pale light/figurine)*
    *anemična kampanja/igra (*Eng. *anemic campaign/play)*
    *avetinjska svetlost/figura/pustoš/muzika (*Eng. *unearthly glow/figures/havoc/music)*

and its near synonyms (*ashen, pallid, livid, wan*) (13)[7], due to the lack of grammatical gender in English.

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bleda kopija/senka/svetlost (Eng. *pale copy/shadow/light*)
bledunjavo zelenilo/sunce (Eng. *pale greenery/sun*)
anemično društvo (Eng. *anemic company*)
avetinjsko priviđenje/bljedilo/poreklo (Eng. *ghostly apparition/pale/sourcing*)
*bledo svetlo (*Eng. *pale light*)

[7] *ashen colour*
pallid hue/white
livid bruise/scar/scratch/fury
wan smile/sunlight/ghost/humour
pale green/colour

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АНАЛИЗА ПРИМЕРА ПРИБЛИЖНЕ СИНОНИМИЈЕ ОПИСНОГ ПРИДЕВА *PALE* У ЕНГЛЕСКОМ И *БЛЕД, -А, -О* У СРПСКОМ

Сажетак

У оквиру опсежног научног истраживања описних придева и њихових приближних синонима приметили смо преовлађујуће присуство идиоматског значења анализираних придева. У овом раду ћемо применити контрастивну анализу описног придева *блед, -а, -о* у српском и описног придева *pale*, као и њихове приближне синониме у енглеском и српском језику како бисмо доказали преовлађујуће присуство пренесеног значења у оба језика. Резултати примењене анализе показују да се семантички (и граматички) аспекти речи одражавају на колокацијско окружење ријечи. У прилог томе, очекује се и да ће се колокацијско окружење придева *блед, -а, -о* променити у зависности од граматичког рода (мушког, женског, средњег), што ће утицати и на след његових приближних синонима. С друге стране, не очекује се да ће се ове промене десити и у енглеском језику управо због недостатка граматичког рода. Методологија истраживања обухвата анализу учесталости примарног и идиоматског значења описног придева *блед, -а, -о* и његових приближних синонима употребом електронског корпуса Савременог српског језика (Математички факултет, Универзитет у Београду), као и анализу описног придева *pale* и његових приближних синонима анализираних употребом Британског Националног Корпуса и базе података Words Bank: Енглески.

Кључне речи: описни придев, приближни синоними, идиоматско значење, граматички род, колокацијско окружење, најучесталији колокати