



Genre and Collocation Investigation of the Near Synonyms: Advise, Suggest and Recommend

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ABSTRACT

This corpus-based study investigates the linguistic behavior and distributional patterns of three English near-synonymous verbs advise, suggest, and recommend. While these lexical items share a core denotational meaning, their actual usage is often governed by subtle nuances that pose challenges for EFL/ESL learners. Data were sampled from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), focusing on frequency distribution across eight distinct genres and an analysis of noun collocations using a Mutual Information (MI) score of 3 or higher to ensure statistical significance. The findings reveal that suggest is the most frequent and formal synonym, predominantly appearing in academic discourse to introduce research evidence and theoretical constructs. In contrast, advise and recommend occur more frequently in less formal digital genres, such as webpages and blogs, reflecting their practical and communicative functions. Collocational analysis shows that advise and recommend share a close semantic relationship, often co-occurring with professional advisers. However, advise is more strongly linked to personal interpersonal guidance and advice recipients, while recommend is heavily associated with official endorsements, medical treatments, and institutional bodies. These results demonstrate that the three verbs inhabit distinct distributional niches and are rarely interchangeable without affecting the register or tone of the discourse. This study underscores the importance of corpus-informed learning in helping non-native speakers navigate the subtle nuances and semantic preferences of English near-synonyms effectively.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Importance of Near Synonyms

There are a number of synonyms that are used with similar meaning. Therefore, it is easy for EFL/ESL language learners, especially beginners, to become confused when they have to choose the right word for a specific circumstance. Choosing a word that is not suitable for a given circumstance can lead to misunderstanding during conversation, which may have both minor and major impact. As mentioned, it is

important that new language learners understand the differences in meaning and circumstance among each group of words that share a similar meaning — what is called “near synonyms.”

Although the words *advise*, *suggest*, and *recommend* are very similar in meaning, they carry linguistic nuances. Thereby, choosing the wrong word for a given context can lead to problems of formality or illocutionary force.

1.2 The Role of Collocation and Genre

Collocation and genre can help distinguish the differences among the words by drawing on linguistic principles. That is, collocation helps identify word behavior; for example, the word *advise* is usually used with a human object while the word *suggest* is usually used with an abstract object. Genre or register helps identify how the situation in which each word is chosen varies according to context. For instance, a given word may be used more often in academic writing than in spoken language or news reporting.

1.3 The Research Gap

According to related previous research, a gap remains to be filled. That is, previous research has tended to focus on semantics alone, with no comparison among the words in terms of their distribution across genre — i.e., webpage, blog, magazines, TV/music, spoken, newspaper, academic, and fiction.

1.4 The Research Objectives

The research objectives are as follows:

- 1) To compare the frequency of distribution of *advise*, *suggest*, and *recommend* across genres using a corpus-based approach.
- 2) To understand the semantic preferences of the noun collocates of the words *advise*, *suggest*, and *recommend*.

In conclusion, despite the similarity in meaning among the words *advise*, *suggest*, and *recommend*, there are differences in terms of genre and collocation.

1.5 Research Questions

Based on the gaps previously identified, the present study aims to address the following research questions:

- 1) To what extent do the near-synonyms *advise*, *suggest*, and *recommend* differ in terms of distributional frequency across various genres in the COCA corpus?
- 2) What are the characteristic noun collocations, and the subsequent semantic preferences, of *advise*, *suggest*, and *recommend* that distinguish their usage in context?

The three target synonymous verbs share the same core meaning according to the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, as follows:

Advise

- 1) to tell someone what you think they should do, especially when you know more than they do about something
- 2) to be employed to give advice on a subject about which you have special knowledge or skill
- 3) to tell someone about something

Suggest

- 1) to tell someone your ideas about what they should do, where they should go, etc.
- 2) to make someone think that a particular thing is true
- 3) to tell someone about someone or something that is suitable for a particular job or activity
- 4) to state something in an indirect way
- 5) to remind someone of something or help them to imagine it

Recommend

- 1) to advise someone to do something, especially because you have special knowledge of a situation or subject
- 2) to say that something or someone is good, or suggest them for a particular purpose or job

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Nature of Synonyms and Near-synonyms

In linguistic study, “absolute synonymy” — where two words are interchangeable in all contexts without any change in meaning is extremely rare (Lyons, 1995). Most words identified as synonyms are, in fact, near-synonyms. These are words that share a similar denotational meaning but differ in nuances such as degree of formality, emotive value, and social context (Phoocharoensil, 2021). According to Cruse (2011), near-synonyms often carry different nuances, meaning their usage is governed by the specific lexical environment and the level of language usually referred to as register.

2.2 Criteria for Distinguishing Near-synonyms

To distinguish between near-synonyms such as *advise*, *suggest*, and *recommend*, two primary criteria are typically employed: register/genre and collocation. In terms of register and genre, near-synonyms often vary according to the level of formality and the field of discourse. For instance, some words are preferred in academic writing, while others are more prevalent in spoken or informal contexts (Biber et al., 2021). In terms of collocation and semantic preference, this refers to the tendency of a word to co-occur with certain other words. Semantic preference, a concept furthered by Sinclair (2004) and Stubbs (2001), describes the relationship between a word and a set of semantically related collocates. For example, a verb might consistently collocate with nouns related to “professional authority” or “empirical evidence.”

2.3 Previous Studies on Synonyms

In recent decades, corpus-based approaches have revolutionized the comparative study of near-synonyms. Recent corpus-based studies have shifted the focus from dictionary definitions to “language in use.” Phoocharoensil (2020a) demonstrated that even though words like *help* and *aid* are synonymous, *aid* is significantly more frequent in formal and written genres, whereas *help* is more versatile. Liu (2013) and Dilshad & Sajjad (2023) emphasize that the choice of a synonym is often dictated by “semantic prosody” — the positive or negative aura a word carries based on its frequent collocates. Specifically regarding verbs of “giving advice,” previous research suggests that while they all aim to influence future action, they differ in “illocutionary force,” or the perceived authority of the speaker (Aijmer, 2014). For example, *advise* is often linked to specialized knowledge, whereas *suggest* is viewed as a more tentative or indirect speech act.

Phoocharoensil (2020b) investigated the synonyms *task*, *job*, and *work* and found that although they share a core meaning of ‘labor,’ their distribution across genres and their collocations vary significantly. *Task* was found to be highly frequent in academic and formal settings, often associated with specific, time-bound duties, whereas *work* functioned as a more generic and high-frequency term. This supports the notion that synonyms are rarely interchangeable without affecting the register or tone of the discourse.

Regarding the specific field of ‘giving advice,’ Al-Amro (2022) conducted a corpus-based study on the verbs *advise* and *suggest* within the British National Corpus (BNC). The results indicated that *advise* carries a stronger ‘illocutionary force,’ often used in top-down communication where the speaker possesses higher social or professional status than the listener. In contrast, *suggest* was found to be more tentative and was frequently used in academic writing to introduce hypotheses or interpret data.

Furthermore, Wongkhumngern & Phoocharoensil (2023) examined near-synonyms in the medical and scientific domain, revealing that words which appear identical in translation often carry distinct ‘semantic prosodies.’ For example, some synonyms of *suggest* are used to convey positive clinical outcomes, while others are restricted to neutral or investigative contexts.

Similarly, Flowerdew (2015) highlighted that in professional and technical communication, the choice between *recommend* and *advise* is often formalistic. *Recommend* is frequently used in reports to offer a range of options based on evaluation, while *advise* is often linked to personal or institutional responsibility. These studies collectively suggest that the differentiation of near-synonyms depends not only on their dictionary definitions but also on the subtle interplay of frequency, genre preference, and the semantic nature of their surrounding vocabulary.

2.4 Collocation and Semantic Preference

The study of near-synonyms is incomplete without an analysis of collocation and semantic preference. Collocation refers to the habitual co-occurrence of lexical items, where a particular word ‘keeps company’ with another with greater than random probability (Sinclair, 1991). In modern corpus linguistics, identifying collocations allows researchers to see the ‘typicality’ of word usage that dictionaries might overlook.

Building on collocation, semantic preference is defined as the relation between a lemma or fixed expression and a set of semantically related words (Stubbs, 2001). While collocation focuses on specific words, semantic preference looks at the category of meaning shared by those collocates. For instance, if a verb frequently co-occurs with nouns like *doctor*, *lawyer*, and *expert*, its semantic preference is categorized as “professional authority.” Understanding these preferences is crucial for non-native learners, as it helps prevent “lexical gravity” errors, where a sentence is grammatically correct but sounds unnatural to native speakers because it violates the word’s established semantic environment (Hoey, 2005; Partington, 2004).

From the previous studies, it is evident that while these near-synonyms share core meanings, their actual usage is governed by complex linguistic factors.

3. Method

3.1 Sample

The linguistic data for this study were sampled from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), one of the largest and most widely used publicly available corpora of English. COCA contains over one billion words of text from eight distinct genres: spoken, fiction, popular magazines, newspapers, academic texts, and, more recently, TV/movie subtitles, blogs, and webpages.

The primary samples for this investigation consist of the three target near-synonymous verbs: *advise*, *suggest*, and *recommend*. The study focuses on their occurrences in the aforementioned genres to analyze their frequency distribution and the noun collocates associated with each verb. By utilizing COCA, the study ensures a representative sample of contemporary American English across various communicative contexts, ranging from informal digital platforms to formal academic discourse.

3.2 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process was conducted systematically through the COCA online interface. The procedure involved the following steps:

1) Frequency and Genre Search: Each target verb (*advise*, *suggest*, *recommend*) was entered into the COCA search engine to retrieve the total frequency of occurrence. The data were then filtered by genre to examine how each word is distributed across the eight categories (webpage, blog, magazine, TV/music, spoken, newspaper, academic, and fiction). Both raw frequencies and normalized frequencies (per million words) were recorded to ensure a fair comparison across genres of different sizes.

2) Collocation Extraction: To investigate the lexical environment, a collocation search was performed for each target verb. The search parameters were set to identify noun collocates appearing within a span of four words to the right of the node word.

3) Applying Statistical Criteria: To ensure the strength and significance of the collocations, the results were filtered based on two primary criteria:

- a) Frequency: the noun must appear with the target verb frequently enough to be considered typical usage.
- b) Mutual Information (MI) Score: only collocates with an MI score of 3 or higher were selected. This score indicates a strong statistical bond between the verb and the noun, rather than a coincidental occurrence (Cheng, 2012).

4) Selection of Top Collocates: for each synonym, the top thirty noun collocates that met the MI criteria were extracted for further semantic analysis (with the exception of *suggest*, which yielded seventeen significant noun collocates based on the MI threshold in this specific search).

3.3 Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study was conducted in accordance with the framework established by Phoocharoensil (2020a). To address the research objectives, the data retrieved from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) were categorized into two primary analytical strands. First, the distributional patterns of the target synonyms across various genres were examined using both raw frequencies and normalized frequencies (per million words) to determine their respective degrees of formality.

Second, to investigate lexical behavior, the top thirty noun collocates for each synonym were identified based on two criteria: frequency of occurrence and a Mutual Information (MI) score of 3 or higher (≥ 3), ensuring statistical significance (Cheng, 2012). Finally, these collocates were qualitatively analyzed and classified into

thematic groups based on their semantic preference. This process facilitated a clear distinction between the near-synonyms by highlighting the specific semantic environments in which each verb typically operates.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Frequency and Distribution of the Synonyms across Genres

For the first research question, the degree of formality of the target synonyms can be examined according to their overall frequency and distribution across different genres.

Table 1. Distribution of the Target Synonyms across Genres

<i>Advise</i>			<i>Suggest</i>			<i>Recommend</i>		
<i>Genres</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per Million</i>	<i>Genres</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per Million</i>	<i>Genres</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per Million</i>
Webpage	1,468	11.81	Academic	21,064	175.84	Webpage	6,584	52.99
Blog	1,322	10.28	Blog	10,440	81.17	Blog	5,671	44.09
Magazines	1,117	8.86	Webpage	10,090	81.20	Magazines	3,790	30.06
TV/Music	1,042	8.14	Magazines	8,759	69.47	Academic	2,425	20.24
Spoken	1,002	7.94	Spoken	5,720	45.35	Newspaper	1,947	15.99
Newspaper	881	7.24	Newspaper	5,352	43.96	Spoken	1,911	15.15
Academic	807	6.74	TV/Music	4,709	36.77	TV/Music	1,747	13.64
Fiction	608	5.14	Fiction	2,678	22.63	Fiction	748	6.32
Total	8,247	8.30	Total	68,812	69.30	Total	24,823	25.00

Table 1 shows that *suggest* (68,812 tokens) occurs with the highest frequency among the three synonyms according to COCA, followed by *recommend* (24,823 tokens) and *advise* (8,247 tokens), respectively. Regarding genre, the synonyms *advise* and *recommend* share the same top three most frequent genres — webpage, blog, and magazines, while *suggest* occurs most frequently in academic texts (21,064 tokens). Furthermore, when it comes to the distribution of these synonyms, all three tend to show a clearly different degree of formality across genres; that is, *advise* appears to be the least formal of the three, *recommend* sits at a middle level of formality, and *suggest* is the most formal among the three synonyms. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that some near-synonyms occur in different contexts with different degrees of formality. For instance, Phoocharoensil (2021) asserts that the selection of near-synonyms is heavily dictated by register, where more formal terms are predominantly found in academic discourse while their counterparts are favored in informal genres. Additionally, such distributional variation reflects the ‘stylistic value’ inherent in each word, which serves as a crucial indicator for distinguishing between seemingly identical lexical items (Biber et al., 2021).

4.2 Analysis of Noun Collocates: Advise, Suggest and Recommend

The top-thirty noun collocates of the target synonyms *advise*, *suggest*, and *recommend*, shown in Table 2, were used to answer the second research question. Noun collocations and semantic preference of *advise*, *suggest*, and *recommend* were examined. These collocations were selected according to frequency of occurrence and MI scores (≥ 3), indicating statistical significance (Cheng, 2012).

Table 2. Noun Collocates of Advise, Suggest and Recommend

<i>Advise</i>			<i>Suggest</i>			<i>Recommend</i>		
<i>Noun Collocates</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>MI Score</i>	<i>Noun Collocates</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>MI Score</i>	<i>Noun Collocates</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>MI Score</i>
1 client	451	4.65	study	5591	3.25	book	1722	3.11
2 doctor	358	3.30	evidence	4747	4.18	doctor	838	3.49
3 expert	316	4.01	research	3933	3.25	expert	595	3.88
4 lawyer	268	3.69	result	3707	3.14	committee	544	3.50
5 attorney	216	3.46	finding	3210	5.06	commission	497	4.17
6 firm	165	3.21	literature	713	3.10	guideline	361	4.99
7 reader	159	3.03	hypothesis	283	3.08	reservation	279	5.02
8 caution	139	6.04	polling	156	3.30	panel	269	3.54
9 consultant	119	4.50	theorist	93	3.08	reading	253	3.08
10 investor	98	3.25	acculturation	28	3.10	manufacturer	188	3.87

11	consent	90	4.62	preponderance	25	3.66	diet	165	3.22
12	counsel	89	4.44	supplementation	23	3.35	therapy	164	3.28
13	physician	76	3.32	temerity	21	4.93	physician	160	3.35
14	discretion	69	5.47	desirability	19	3.14	vaccine	128	3.74
15	counselor	64	3.71	methylation	17	3.12	prevention	112	3.38
16	viewer	58	3.21	modulation	17	3.16	counselor	86	3.09
17	planner	43	4.25	etiology	16	3.04	vaccination	84	4.97
18	academic	42	4.60				dose	84	3.23
19	traveler	34	3.36				therapist	83	3.60
20	counseling	33	3.08				screening	75	3.51
21	motorist	29	5.18				supplement	75	3.97
22	homeowner	29	3.56				planner	68	3.87
23	therapist	28	3.08				pediatrics	64	5.90
24	manual	25	3.28				minimum	61	3.23
25	strategist	24	3.96				vitamin	61	3.07
26	start-up	21	3.18				removal	59	3.23
27	policymaker	18	3.66				intake	53	3.73
28	accountant	15	3.22				practitioner	50	3.00
29	dermatologist	13	5.01				allowance	50	4.28
30	clinician	13	3.72				suspension	43	3.01

As shown in Table 2, there are thirty noun collocates with an MI score (≥ 3) for *advise* and *recommend*, while only seventeen noun collocates of *suggest* met the threshold in this study. The target words, though perceived as near-synonyms, co-occur with largely different sets of collocates. It can be seen that the three synonyms do not share any noun collocates as a whole group. *Advise* and *recommend* share six noun collocates *doctor*, *expert*, *physician*, *counselor*, *planner*, and *therapist* — while *suggest* shares no noun collocates with the other two synonyms. It can therefore be concluded that *advise* and *recommend* are more closely related synonyms than *suggest*.

Regarding *advise* and *recommend*, the six shared noun collocates between them denote specialists: *doctor*, *expert*, *physician*, *counselor*, *planner*, and *therapist*. Thus, it can be summarized that *advise* and *recommend* are possibly used when the credentials of the person involved matter for reliability in real-world contexts.

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that certain lexical items co-occurring with the three synonyms may not have been captured in the COCA search due to low collocation strength. Following the principle suggested by Hill (2000), such infrequent collocations were excluded from this study, as they are less likely to be encountered by language learners and do not represent typical usage. The following section provides a detailed analysis of the semantic preferences for each target word, categorizing the identified noun collocates into thematic groups based on their semantic relationships.

Table 3. Semantic Preference of Noun Collocates of Advise

Professional Advisers	doctor, expert, lawyer, attorney, consultant, physician, counselor, therapist, planner, strategist, academic, policymaker, dermatologist, clinician
Advice Recipients	client, reader, viewer, investor, traveler, motorist, homeowner, accountant
Organizations / Institutional Entities	firm, start-up
Behavioural or Decision-oriented Abstract Nouns	caution, consent, discretion
Advice-Related Processes or Documents	counsel, counseling, manual

Table 3 shows that the noun collocates of *advise* reveal clear and systematic semantic preferences that reflect the verb's core function in conveying guidance, instruction, and informed judgment. The largest group comprises Professional Advisers, including medical, legal, financial, and policy-oriented experts such as *doctor*, *lawyer*, *consultant*, *physician*, and *policymaker*. These collocates show that *advise* frequently appears in contexts involving authoritative or knowledge-based guidance.

A second major cluster, Advice Recipients, consists of nouns denoting laypersons, clients, or members of the public such as *client*, *reader*, *traveler*, and *homeowner*. These collocates highlight the interpersonal nature of *advise*, where information flows from specialized advisers to non-experts.

The verb also collocates with Organizations and Institutional Entities (*firm*, *start-up*), demonstrating its use in business and organizational communication, where advice is given to or within corporate structures.

Beyond human entities, *advise* shows a preference for Behavioural or Decision-oriented Abstract Nouns, including *caution*, *consent*, and *discretion*. These collocates indicate that the verb often refers not only to advising people but also to recommending particular behaviours, attitudes, or courses of action.

Finally, the data include a smaller but meaningful group associated with Advice-Related Processes or Documents, such as *counsel*, *counseling*, and *manual*. These nouns represent either the act of giving advice or the textual artefacts through which advice is communicated, underscoring the procedural and institutional dimensions of advising practices.

Taken together, these semantic groupings demonstrate that *advise* is strongly associated with professional authority, recipient-oriented communication, organizational decision-making, behaviour regulation, and formal mechanisms of guidance. These patterns align with the verb's typical usage in professional, administrative, and instructional registers.

Table 4. Semantic Preference of Noun Collocates of Suggest

Research Evidence / Empirical Support	evidence, result, finding, preponderance, polling
Research Processes / Academic Work	study, research, literature
Conceptual or Theoretical Constructs	hypothesis, theorist, desirability, temerity, etiology, acculturation
Biological / Scientific Mechanisms or Processes	methylation, modulation, supplementation

Table 4 shows that the noun collocates of *suggest* reveal distinct semantic preferences that reflect the verb's frequent use in academic, scientific, and theoretical contexts. The first and largest group, Research Evidence and Empirical Support, includes nouns such as *evidence*, *result*, *finding*, *preponderance*, and *polling*. These collocates indicate that *suggest* commonly co-occurs with data-driven or observational information, highlighting the verb's role in drawing inferences or indicating conclusions based on empirical findings.

A second group, Research Processes and Academic Work, consists of nouns including *study*, *research*, and *literature*, emphasizing the verb's association with scholarly investigation and systematic inquiry. This pattern reflects how *suggest* is frequently used in academic writing to communicate interpretations, recommendations, or insights derived from research.

The third group, Conceptual or Theoretical Constructs, encompasses abstract and analytical nouns such as *hypothesis*, *theorist*, *desirability*, *temerity*, *etiology*, and *acculturation*. These collocates suggest that *suggest* is employed not only to indicate empirical findings but also to advance theoretical reasoning, conceptual analysis, and normative evaluation.

Finally, Biological and Scientific Mechanisms or Processes, including *methylation*, *modulation*, and *supplementation*, demonstrate that *suggest* also occurs in specialized scientific discourse, particularly in contexts where biological or biochemical processes are interpreted or recommended for further study.

Overall, the semantic preferences of *suggest* reveal its strong alignment with empirical, theoretical, and scientific domains. Unlike verbs such as *advise*, which often imply interpersonal guidance, *suggest* is more frequently associated with evidence-based reasoning, scholarly interpretation, and the communication of research-informed propositions.

Table 5. Semantic Preference of Noun Collocates of Recommend

Professional Advisers	doctor, expert, physician, counselor, therapist, planner, practitioner
Institutional or Official Bodies (Organizations that issue recommendations)	committee, commission, panel, manufacturer, pediatrics

Recommended Medical Treatments, Procedures, and Prevention Measures	therapy, vaccine, vaccination, dose, screening, prevention, removal, suspension
Recommended Nutritional Items or Intake Quantities	diet, supplement, vitamin, intake, allowance, minimum
Recommended Texts or Reading Materials	book, reading, guideline
Opinions or Conditions Related to Decisions	reservation

Table 5 shows that the noun collocates of *recommend* reveal systematic semantic preferences that reflect the verb's use in professional, institutional, medical, and advisory contexts. The first group, Professional Advisers, includes nouns such as *doctor*, *expert*, *physician*, *counselor*, *therapist*, *planner*, and *practitioner*. These collocates indicate that *recommend* frequently occurs in contexts where authoritative or trained individuals provide guidance or endorse actions, treatments, or behaviors.

A second group, Institutional or Official Bodies, comprises entities such as *committee*, *commission*, *panel*, *manufacturer*, and *pediatrics*. These collocates show that *recommend* is often used in formal or organizational contexts, where institutions issue standards, guidelines, or procedural advice.

The third group, Recommended Medical Treatments, Procedures, and Prevention Measures, includes *therapy*, *vaccine*, *vaccination*, *dose*, *screening*, *prevention*, *removal*, and *suspension*. These collocates highlight the verb's strong association with clinical practice and health-related decision-making, emphasizing interventions or preventive actions endorsed by professionals or authorities.

The fourth group, Recommended Nutritional Items or Intake Quantities, consists of nouns such as *diet*, *supplement*, *vitamin*, *intake*, *allowance*, and *minimum*. This pattern reflects the frequent use of *recommend* in public health and nutrition contexts, particularly when specifying consumption levels or dietary standards.

A fifth group, Recommended Texts or Reading Materials, including *book*, *reading*, and *guideline*, shows that *recommend* is also applied to informational, instructional, or educational resources.

Finally, the sixth group, Opinions or Conditions Related to Decisions, represented by *reservation*, illustrates that *recommend* can extend to advisory contexts involving choices, planning, or conditional guidance.

In summary, the semantic preferences of *recommend* indicate its strong association with authoritative guidance across professional, institutional, medical, nutritional, and educational domains, reflecting both prescriptive and advisory functions in formal and practical contexts.

5. Conclusion

The present study investigated the distributional patterns and linguistic behavior of the three near-synonyms *advise*, *suggest*, and *recommend* using the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). The findings provide significant insights into how these verbs are distinguished in actual usage.

Regarding distribution across genres, the results reveal that *suggest* is the most frequently used verb, particularly dominant in academic discourse, which marks it as the most formal synonym among the three. In contrast, *advise* and *recommend* show a higher preference for digital and popular genres such as webpages and blogs, suggesting a more practical and communicative application in less formal contexts.

In terms of noun collocations and semantic preferences, the study highlights clear distinctions:

- *Advise* and *recommend* share a close semantic relationship, often co-occurring with "Professional Advisers" (e.g., *doctor*, *expert*). However, *advise* is more strongly linked to "Advice Recipients" and personal decision-making, while *recommend* is heavily associated with "Medical Treatments" and "Institutional Bodies," reflecting its role in official endorsements.
- *Suggest* operates in a distinct semantic environment, primarily associated with "Research Evidence" and "Theoretical Constructs." Unlike the other two, it focuses on evidence-based inferences rather than interpersonal guidance.

In conclusion, while these verbs may appear interchangeable in dictionaries, their corpus-based profiles demonstrate that they inhabit different "distributional niches." *Suggest* is the verb of choice for scholarly interpretation, *advise* for professional interpersonal guidance, and *recommend* for formal endorsements and

medical procedures. These findings underscore the importance of corpus-informed learning in helping non-native speakers navigate the subtle nuances of English near-synonyms effectively.

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