

# Lexical patterns in academic book reviews: a corpus-based study of evaluative language in applied linguistics

## Abstract

Academic Book Reviews (henceforth ABRs) serve as a key evaluative genre in scholarly communication that allows reviewers to appraise knowledge, articulate stance, and align with disciplinary norms (Martin & White, 2005; Hyland, 2000; Motta-Roth, 1998). In this conference presentation, I focus on the second research question of my PhD project, which investigates the evaluatively loaded lexical patterns, such as frequent lexical items, collocations, and word clusters present in ABRs in Applied Linguistics. This study explores lexical patterns through a corpus-based approach (McEnery & Hardie, 2012; Biber, Conrad, & Reppen, 1998). A curated dataset of ten book reviews, drawn from two top-tier journals—*Journal of Applied Linguistics* and *Journal of Second Language Writing*—was analysed using corpus tools—AntConc and Sketch Engine. The findings reveal that high-frequency words carrying stance or evaluation are valuable, insightful, innovative, and comprehensive, while salient word clusters that appear are the book provides, a valuable contribution and critical reflection on. Sketch Engine found recurring collocations such as robust framework, clear argument, comprehensive review, and thoughtful analysis. Most frequent collocates of a specific word, such as 'chapter', are informative, detailed, rich, and uneven. The extensive exploration of lexico-grammatical patterns offers precise comprehension of evaluative language and genre-specific wordlists for L2 writers.