

# Book Review

***Corpus Linguistics for Education: A Guide for Research.* Pascual Pérez-Paredes.**

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Pascual Pérez-Paredes' *Corpus Linguistics for Education: A Guide for Research* navigates the terrain of Corpus Linguistics as both a research methodology and a set of methods. Inspired by McEnery and Wilson (1), Pérez-Paredes defines corpus linguistics as 'the study of language based on examples of real-life language use' (9) and champions its application in educational research. This comprehensive yet concise guide addresses the scarcity of resources on Corpus Linguistics in education. The book unfolds as a practical workbook for novice researchers, introducing eighteen core skills for using Corpus Linguistics methods in educational research. Pérez-Paredes demonstrates the application of these skills using accessible language and illustrative examples, making the book an ideal resource for those unfamiliar with Corpus Linguistics.

In the opening chapter, Pérez-Paredes introduces the foundational concept of frequency, emphasising its importance in identifying linguistic patterns. Subsequent chapters delve into textual analysis, corpus approaches, and language understanding. The book's strength lies in its hands-on approach, providing step-by-step guidance on corpus design,

transcription, annotation, and ending with lexis analysis and the exploration of spoken data. The concluding chapter skilfully addresses the challenges of bridging gaps between Corpus Linguistics methods and educational research and advocates for the complementary nature of Corpus Linguistics as both a quantitative and qualitative research method.

Chapter One serves as an introduction to Corpus Linguistics, emphasising its potential in educational research. Pérez-Paredes highlights the capability of Corpus Linguistics to identify linguistic patterns and trends crucial for expanding perspectives in educational research. The chapter concludes by introducing the core concept of frequency, laying the groundwork for subsequent discussions.

Diving into various types of textual analysis, the second chapter explores content, theme, conversational and discourse analysis, alongside Corpus Linguistics analysis of registers. Pérez-Paredes illustrates the versatility of Corpus Linguistics through examples, showcasing its application in analysing experiences, such as those of 33 UK school children in a forest school (a program encouraging learning in natural environments). Thematic analysis reveals how specific facets of play shape meaning in children’s learning journeys (42).

The third chapter uses case studies to show how corpus methods can be used for both qualitative data collection and analysis to yield more sound and valid results. This chapter is tremendously helpful in assisting researchers to assess their need for using a previously compiled corpus. Pérez-Paredes explores the chances of answering research questions with an existing corpus, considering the target population's representativeness and ethical considerations, among other factors. The chapter also introduces concordance lines, which list the occurrences of a word or phrase within its surrounding context. This serves as an open-door entry to set a detailed model for reading and examining these lines,

and further explores specific concepts such as ‘collocation’, as suggested by Evert and Sinclair. The latter refers to words co-occurring habitually, highlighting its statistical implication using some related statistical concepts. The chapter then explains how to handle frequency before progressing to teaching retrieving collocation. The chapter goes from general to specific, introducing four fundamental skills to show the potential implementations of corpus techniques in educational research for beginners.

Extending the discussion, the fourth chapter covers corpus design specifically tailored for educational purposes. Pérez-Paredes provides practical procedures for designing a corpus, offering insights into relevant calculations and ratios that can help infer characteristics about a corpus, as well as when and why these measures are relevant. The chapter concludes with guidance on comparing two corpora using statistical tests, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of corpus design. The chapter concludes with a series of prompts to stimulate reflection.

Focusing on practical steps and guidelines for transcribing and annotating data collected through interviews, the fifth chapter emphasizes the importance of data annotations. Pérez-Paredes offers guided steps for annotating a corpus, setting the stage for effective data analysis in subsequent chapters. This chapter delves into lexis analysis, providing a detailed guide to conducting keyword and multiword analyses. Pérez-Paredes illustrates the examination of individual words and multiword expressions using the Sketch Engine interface, offering specific examples of various types of text. The implications of these observations are discussed in the context of the research questions raised in various projects.

By analysing spoken data from interviews, the seventh chapter reviews skills presented in the previous chapters (five and six), focusing

on data transcription as a nuanced task. Pérez-Paredes emphasises understanding keywords, searching for nouns and phrases, and using complex searches. The chapter highlights how spoken data differs from written data in the sense that it contains more discourse markers and formulaic language. This makes spoken data particularly relevant to culture-bound research projects.

The concluding chapter skilfully addresses challenges in bridging gaps between Corpus Linguistics methods and educational research. Pérez-Paredes highlights the lack of corpora related to research methods in education as the first challenge and advocates using Corpus Linguistics as a complementary research method for qualitative analysis as a solution to the second challenge. The conclusion reaffirms the guide's value as a comprehensive resource for novice researchers.

Like the preceding chapters, this section offers practical insights into examining the role of lexis in shaping discourse through tangible examples. In the conclusion, the author asks direct questions, like how chapter five has changed readers' minds about the process of data transcription, as well as hypotheticals, such as how to go about investigating particular themes in a corpus of transcribed interviews. These questions not only serve as reflections on recently acquired knowledge but also encourage readers to contemplate the practical application of these skills in their unique educational research projects.

The book adeptly introduces eighteen skills throughout its chapters, accompanied by a glossary, fostering statistical literacy. Addressing the scarcity of Corpus Linguistics in educational research, the author ensures accessibility, explicitly stating that no prior knowledge of corpus methods is assumed. This feature makes *Corpus Linguistics for Education* an excellent resource for novice researchers intrigued by corpus methods as it is tailored to those with little to no experience. The author, therefore, not only fills a gap in the literature regarding the

scarcity of using Corpus Linguistics methods in educational research but also subtly alleviated concerns about the complexity of quantitative approaches in Corpus Linguistics. This was achieved by clearly indicating that ‘no previous knowledge of corpus methods is assumed in readers’ when writing this book (Pérez-Paredes i).

The book proves invaluable for educational research, particularly in supporting qualitative data collection and analysis. It has the potential to pave the way for high-quality research in the field of education in a new era of interdisciplinary methodologies.

#### **WORKS CITED**

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