

# **Semantic Prosody of Adverbial Maximizers in Hotel Reviews**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates semantic prosody, which is the tendency of words to combine with positively or negatively charged words. Focusing on maximizing adverbs like *utterly*, *completely*, *totally*, *entirely*, and *terribly*, the emotional and evaluative connotations of words or phrases that combine with these maximizers are investigated in hotel reviews. Relevant occurrences were extracted from datasets with reviews from Booking.com and TripAdvisor. The collocates of maximizers in these observations were carefully annotated for positive, negative, or neutral connotations. A quantitative analysis revealed the distinctive semantic prosody of each maximizer, with varying tendencies towards extremes as apparent from the annotated observations. *Utterly* and *terribly* exhibit a propensity to combine with emotionally charged adjectives, whether negative or positive, but rarely with neutral adjectives. *Terribly* emerges as the adverb with the highest number of negative occurrences; moreover, when it occurs with a positive word, the sentence often contains negation, so that the positivity of the collocate is mitigated. The dataset analysis showcases a total of 776 occurrences of negative sentiment, 520 occurrences of positive sentiment, and 194 neutral occurrences. The data are analyzed and discussed in more detail. The findings, emphasizing the varying semantic prosody exhibited by the maximizers, shed light on the impacts on sentiment within hotel reviews.

**Keywords:** *semantic prosody, maximizers, hotel reviews, polarity, sentiment analysis.*

## SAMMENDRAG

Denne oppgaven undersøker semantisk prosodi, som er et ords tendens til å opptre sammen med positivt eller negativt ladde ord. Med fokus på maksimerende adverb som *utterly*, *completely*, *totally*, *entirely*, og *terribly*, blir de emosjonelle og evaluerende konnotasjonene til ord eller setninger som kombineres med disse adverb undersøkt i hotellanmeldelser. Relevante forekomster ble trukket ut fra datasett med anmeldelser fra Booking.com og TripAdvisor. Kollokasjonene med disse maksimerende adverbene ble nøye annotert mht. positive, negative eller nøytrale konnotasjoner. Gjennom en kvantitativ analyse av de annoterte observasjonene ble den særegne semantiske prosodien til hver maksimerer kartlagt, og ble varierende tendenser til ekstremer avslørt. *Utterly* og *terribly* har en tilbøyelighet til å opptre sammen med følelsesladde adjektiver, enten negative eller positive, men sjelden med nøytrale adjektiver. *Terribly* fremstår som adverbet med det høyeste antallet negative forekomster; dessuten, når det forekommer med et positivt ord, inneholder setningen ofte negasjon, slik at den positive polariteten til kollokasjonen dempes. Analysen av datasettet viser 776 forekomster med negativ konnotasjon, 520 forekomster med positiv konnotasjon og 194 neutrale. Dataene blir undersøkt og diskutert i mer detalj. Funnene understreker at det er varierende semantisk prosodi hos de ulike maksimerere og kaster lys over innvirkningen på sentiment i hotellanmeldelser.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Thanks to the widespread availability of digital text in corpora and elsewhere on the web, the patterns in which words tend to occur have been increasingly researched. Word combination tendencies also extend to broad semantic categories, such as positive and negative connotations that are often attached to certain words. The word *excel*, for instance, is usually combined with concepts that are considered positive, such as *He excels in creative writing*; in contrast, the word is rarely used, often to ironic effect, with negative concepts, such as *He excels in gullibility*. Such preferential combination patterns that carry positive or negative attitudes are the study of *semantic prosody*. This field of study is addressed in the current thesis.

### 1.1 Semantic Prosody

Semantic prosody, which is my main topic in this study, refers to the subtle, often unnoticed, emotional, or evaluative connotations associated with certain words or phrases. Unlike the standard definition of a word (its denotation), semantic prosody considers the additional nuances or emotional coloring a word carries in specific contexts. It plays a crucial role in shaping how language is interpreted, understood, and the underlying emotions or attitudes it may evoke in communication.

In linguistic analysis, researchers such as (Ebeling, 2014a; Hauser & Schwarz, 2016, 2018; Ji & We, 2000; B. Louw, 1993; Partington, 2004; Q. Wang, 2004; Wei, 2006) have studied semantic prosody to comprehend how words and phrases extend beyond their literal meanings, influencing the overall tone and emotional impact of communication. This concept helps identify how certain words, even though they may seem neutral in meaning, can evoke positive, negative, or neutral associations based on their usage in various contexts. Understanding semantic prosody aids in accurate and nuanced interpretation of texts, speeches, or conversations, thereby enabling individuals to grasp the deeper implications and emotional resonance embedded within language. It is explored and employed in various



linguistic studies, discourse analysis, and language teaching to help learners and researchers better understand the subtleties of language and its impact on communication and interpretation.

## **1.2 Expressiveness in the Hospitality Domain**

In the present era, individuals typically prefer online communication and socialization. Within travel platforms, individuals share their viewpoints and write reviews of their hotel stays. Harnessing this substantial data resource holds significant importance for tourism associations and organizations to boost profits and improve or sustain customer satisfaction. Hence, it is crucial for hoteliers to harness the multitude of opportunities arising from internet technology by creating their own websites for online marketing and booking purposes. Therefore, this research concentrates on the utilization of language in a broad sense, with a specific emphasis on adverbial maximizers in hotel reviews for promotional and customer relation objectives on websites such as Tripadvisor and Booking.com. In today's world, these travel platforms have become significant resources for travelers as they make choices about their lodging, dining options, and tourist destinations and attractions. These travel websites feature content generated by users, offering valuable insights from a multitude of people's perspectives.

## **1.3 Objectives**

From a theoretical point of view, this research aims to further research on semantic prosody. In this endeavor, the focus is on the semantic prosody of adverbial maximizers such as *utterly*, *completely*, *totally*, *entirely*, and *terribly*. It is expected that these exhibit strong tendencies in the polarity of their collocates, even more so because hotel reviews tend to contain statements which are clearly positive or negative, such as *totally satisfied* or *utterly disgusted*.

From the practical side, this research might be useful for the hotel industry to not only care about evaluative adjectives which convey positive or negative values, but also about words carrying semantic prosody which enhance the polarity of statements in the reviews. This research illustrates how consumer-created content, such as customer reviews on Booking.com, and Tripadvisor websites, can serve as valuable information for deriving fresh perspectives on the characteristics of hotel offerings. Additionally, it highlights a promising

avenue for utilizing genuine consumer experience data to facilitate the creation of perceptual maps and market segments within the hospitality and tourism sector.

## **1.4 Limitations of the Study**

This study has some limitations: Firstly, the dataset (which will be introduced in detail below) contains some reviews which are not well-written. Some contain typing errors or grammatically odd sentences. An unknown number of the reviews are written by people whose first language is not English and with various levels of linguistic competency. On the one hand, it could be a limitation of the study that it is not possible to know the linguistic background of the authors of the reviews. On the other hand, English as a second language is also a variety of English that is worth including in studies such as the present one.

Secondly, this research is specifically centered on online reviews exclusively sourced from Tripadvisor.com and booking.com. While these hold the distinction of being the most influential travel review platforms globally, it is essential to acknowledge that opinions and content may exhibit variations when compared to other travel websites such as Hotels.com or Expedia.com. Future research endeavors could explore whether similar patterns are observed in hotel reviews on alternative websites.

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

After years of research, the examination of semantic prosody has expanded beyond its terminology to encompass various aspects of corpus analysis, with some studies also delving into cross-cultural perspectives. In addition, throughout EFL/ESL students' careers, they will use English dictionaries and bilingual dictionaries to determine definitions of individual words and word phrases. Zhang (2009) argued that semantic prosody can help students understand how to use lexical items. Pan and Feng (2003) stated that semantic prosody should be included in dictionaries, especially when they are being designed for EFL learners. Research on semantic prosody not only helps the education system but also specifically can assist other sections such as hospitality, technology and so on. While there is a plethora of research on various aspects of semantic prosody and word characteristics in education, there remains a limited body of work exploring semantic prosody, especially on maximizers in specific fields like hospitality. If you have a system that can automatically detect the semantic prosody that would be interesting and practical for the hospitality industry in a way that it

could help to spot immediately that each review of the guests is positive or negative. Also, businesses in the hospitality industry use this information to improve their communication, marketing, or customer service strategies.

## 1.6 Research Questions

The aim of this study was to attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What is the semantic prosody of maximizers like *utterly*, *entirely*, *totally*, *completely*, and *terribly*, as apparent from hotel reviews?
2. Is there a correlation between the polarity of their collocates and the polarity of the reviews in which they are used?
3. How does negation affect a maximizer, in particular *terribly*?
4. Are the findings in line with related research in the literature?
5. Are there perspectives for applying semantic prosody in the interpretation of hotel reviews?

## CHAPTER 2

# THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Introduction

The notion of semantic prosody (SP) was initially presented to the general audience by Louw (1993). Since then, it has emerged as a significant idea in corpus linguistics, attracting increasing interest from linguists specializing in corpus studies. Over time, it has demonstrated considerable possibilities in various areas such as creating dictionaries, translation, and aiding second language learning. In other words, semantic prosody is derived when a word such as *cause* in a statement is surrounded regularly by one or more specific words to transfer a meaning and consequently some of the meanings of those words are acquired which is called semantic prosody.

Louw (1993) characterizes semantic prosody as the "persistent essence of meaning that a structure acquires through its associations with other linguistic elements." According to (Partington, 1998, p. 68), semantic prosody pertains to the extension of suggestive emotional nuances beyond the confines of individual word boundaries. (Stewart, 2010) in his book explained more in details about the history of semantic prosody by various researchers:

Semantic prosody (as cited in Stewart, 2010) was first discussed by Sinclair in 1987. In fact, he did not use the same term as today. He had a close observation on the lexicogrammatical environment of the phrasal verb *set in*. Later in 1991, he observed a corpus of about 7.3 million words as he was so enthusiastic about it. He came to the point that 1. *set in* – in most cases, generally, were seen in short clauses- six words or less or it was longer due to adjunct not the subject itself. 2. *-set in-* had a tendency to be sentence-final in most clauses. In 22 out of 29 cases, *set in* were placed to finalize the clauses.

The term *semantic prosody* received wide currency in 1993 by Louw after Firth's arguments about prosody in phonological terms. In this regard, Louw claimed that when the reader or hearer faces the expression *symptomatic of*, something undesirable comes to his mind, such as *numerous disorders, parental paralysis, etc.* (Stewart, 2010)

Bublitz 1996 (as cited in Stewart, 2010) argued that words often carry not only their literal meaning but also an additional evaluative connotation or emotional coloring known as semantic prosody. This concept suggests that certain words tend to evoke positive or negative associations, beyond their explicit definitions. Bublitz's work highlighted that even neutral words could be associated with positive or negative connotations based on their usage in different contexts. This emotional coloring could influence the overall perception of a text or discourse. For example, it has been claimed that the adverb *utterly* is characterized by an unfavorable semantic prosody on account of its habitual co-occurrence with words denoting unfavorable states of affairs such as *ridiculous*, *disgraceful*, and *miserable*. Mainly due to this factor, semantic prosody has predominantly surfaced within the domain of corpus linguistics. It explores the applicability of the priming theory in this context and evaluates the theoretical validity of semantic prosody. Ultimately, it provides direction for future research in this field. Since work on semantic prosody so far has been occasional, brief, and distributed across a range of monographs, articles and conference papers will constitute a fundamental work of reference for scholars, teachers, and students alike. Simultaneously, Semantic Prosody extends beyond the main focus of the study, carrying far-reaching consequences for both corpus linguistics and linguistics as a whole. In this regard, the concept of semantic prosody serves as a starting point for exploring crucial aspects of corpus studies, including how text is organized and presented in a corpus, the diverse methodologies analysts use to approach and interpret corpus data, and more overarching considerations such as the significance of intuition, introspection, and elicitation in empirical language studies. Investigation into semantic prosody was continued by Bublitz in 1996. He believed that the meaning of every node in a clause may be influenced by its habitual co-occurrences. It can have a positive or negative profile. He examines some words characteristics by semantic prosody such as *cause*, *happen*, *commit*, *somewhat* and *prevail*. He continued that meaning lives not in a word but other neighbor words in a sentence. In fact, it is worth mentioning that Bublitz' explanation of semantic prosody compared to previous studies was more diachronic.

The idea is becoming increasingly supported by evidence that words tend to naturally combine with other words from a specific group of related meanings (Stubbs, 2009).

According to Stewart's book, four types of combining patterns from linguistic view were distinguished (Sinclair, 1996, 2004; Stubbs, 2013)

1. Collocation is the tendency of specific words to combine, such as *atomic bomb* or *heavenly bodies*. Strong collocations border on becoming lexicalized.
2. Colligation involves syntactic categories, such as the combination of *try* with modal verbs.
3. Semantic preference involves semantic fields, such as the combination of *outpour of emotions*.
4. Semantic prosody is much like semantic preference, but involves positive or negative sentiment, such as the above-mentioned tendency of *excel* to combine with positive collocating words, and *signs of* with negative ones (Ebeling, 2014a; Stubbs, 2001). We say that *excel* has positive semantic prosody, and *signs of* has negative semantic prosody.

The semantic prosody of a word does not mean it has any positive or negative load. Rather, it means that the word creates expectations about what is to follow. When words with non-neutral semantic prosody are used in discourse, the speaker/writer is creating expectations about the collocating words and thereby laying a trail of speaker attitudes. The effect can be an amplification of the pragmatic load in the utterance. In case the collocating word has a connotation, which is in opposition to the semantic prosody, there can be an element of irony.

Later on, another definition of semantic prosody was suggested which refers to the tendency of words to frequently appear alongside other words belonging to a specific semantic category. A related concept, known as semantic preference, pertains not to the connection between individual words but rather to the association between a lemma or word form and a group of words that share related semantic meanings(Alrajhi, 2019).

## **2.2 Classification of Semantic Prosody**

According to Stubbs (1995, p. 199), certain words tend to carry primarily negative prosody, a few have positive prosody, and many words remain neutral in this aspect. When a word attracts collocates that are predominantly characterized by strong negative meanings, the word itself takes on a distinctly negative prosody. Conversely, if the collocates are mostly positive words, the word gains a positive prosody. When both positive and negative collocates are present in the context, the word can be described as having a neutral or mixed

prosody. It is important to emphasize that semantic prosody is distinct from the concepts of commendatory and derogatory words that are traditionally studied in lexicology. The words or phrases that convey praise or criticism inherently possess a positive or negative meaning. However, in the context of semantic prosody, the node word itself does not hold an explicitly positive or negative connotation. Instead, it is the distinctive collocates it attracts that share a specific semantic association.

These combinations of words have also been demonstrated to serve a specific communication intention within a meaningful context, known as its semantic prosody. This occurrence has been a subject of study in English corpus linguistics for the last twenty years, with various researchers pinpointing these prosodies for multiple elements.

An illustration of this is the phrasal verb *set in*, which is predominantly observed to appear alongside subjects that relate to undesirable situations such as *rot*, *decay*, and *despair* (Sinclair, 1991). This association creates a negative semantic prosody. In a prior cross-linguistic analysis involving an English component known for its negative prosody, which includes the term *cause*, and its equivalents in Norwegian, the research unveiled that the preferred Norwegian translation for the verb *cause* 'få (x til å)' displays a leaning toward a neutral prosody, rather than the negative connotation associated with the term *cause*. (Ebeling, 2014a)

According to Selmistraitis (2020) , the concept of *semantic prosody* has been expanded upon through the concept of *semantic preference*, which is intimately connected with semantic prosody and can be described as "the semantic categories shared by the frequent collocates of a specific node item" (Partington, 2004). One key distinction between semantic prosody and semantic preference is that "semantic preference can align with any identifiable semantic field, whereas semantic prosody always falls into either the category of positive or negative evaluation" (as cited in Selmistraitis, 2020). Positive prosody conveys the speaker's approval, while negative prosody conveys the speaker's disapproval. In essence, semantic prosody delineates how an utterance should be functionally interpreted within a text. However, these two phenomena, semantic preference, and semantic prosody, are sometimes treated as the same concept or viewed as distinct yet closely interconnected. Semantic preference and semantic prosody operate on different scales. Preference operates within the realm of a semantic set, while semantic prosody extends its influence over larger sections of text. Semantic preference is influenced by the collocates of a specific node, whereas semantic

prosody pertains specifically to the characteristics of the node word itself (Selmistraitis, 2020).

## 2.3 Previous Relevant Studies

In the exploration of semantic prosody, numerous studies have delved into various facets of semantic prosody in language learning and education. Each study I looked at was like a building block, helping me build a clearer picture of what I was trying to explore. This literature review explores what other researchers have already discovered in semantic prosody. I am piecing together the puzzle of past studies to see what I have found. By doing this, I hope to place my own research in the bigger picture and understand the gaps and trends.

Semantic prosody extends beyond the main focus of the research, bearing significant consequences for both corpus linguistics and linguistics as a whole. In this context, the concept of semantic prosody serves as a starting point for inquiries into critical aspects of corpus studies, including the organization and representation of text in a corpus, the diverse methodologies employed by analysts for approaching and interpreting corpus data, and more extensive considerations like the influence of intuition, introspection, and elicitation in empirical language studies. (Stewart, 2010)

To determine the semantic prosody of three lexical items in English Chinese bilingual dictionaries, Ji and We (2000) chose *set in*, *rife*, and *propaganda* and noted that none of the dictionaries they examined listed the phrase *set in* as being of a negative semantic prosody. The word *rife* was translated as if it had a positive semantic prosody. Wang (2004) examined five lexical items, *incite*, *impressive*, *contribute to*, *persist* and *persevere* in ten English Chinese bilingual dictionaries. Wang found that *impressive* and *persevere* were appropriately translated into a positive semantic prosody, but that *incite* and *persist* were not presented in a negative semantic prosody in the dictionaries. In addition, the phrase *contribute to* contributes a neutral prosody. Both studies suggested that the poor representation of semantic prosody could mislead non-native English learners in their use of English words.

In another study, Wang and Wang (2005) compared the writing tasks of native English and Chinese learners. The results revealed that there is a noticeable difference between Chinese learners of English and English native speakers in the semantic prosody of the verb *cause*. It



was concluded that Chinese learners of English underuse the typical negative prosody and at the same time overuse the atypical positive prosody. Despite the strong design, it was only confined to one lexical item, which might threaten the generalizability of the findings. In addition, it did not pay adequate attention to its collocation patterns used by the Chinese learners.

In general, the lack of semantic prosody, with regards to lexical items, in designing both English and Chinese languages for EFL/ESL students is not ideal. (Partington 1998) has stated, “Information about semantic prosody is vital for non-native speakers to understand not only what is grammatically possible in their language production but... also what is appropriate and what actually happens” (pp. 8). Zhang (2009) mentioned two reasons for the errors associated with semantic prosody and non-native English learning. The first is that “ESL/EFL instructors may be unaware of the importance of semantic prosody and underestimate it in teaching” and second that, “ESL/EFL textbooks or bilingual dictionaries do not explicitly represent the feature of semantic prosody or may provide inappropriate semantic prosodic information that can mislead language learners” (pp. 9-10). This has been noted in Ji and We(2000) and Q. Wang (2004) studies of English Chinese bilingual dictionaries (as cited in Lee, 2011). It would be essential to state clearly about semantic prosody in bilingual dictionaries particularly for non-native English speaking learners in intermediate and lower levels of proficiency. Over the last twenty years or so, semantic prosody has aroused considerable attention within corpus linguistics. Interest in the subject was initially kindled in the late 1980s by Sinclair’s observations about the lexico-grammatical environment of the phrasal verb *set in*, later reiterated in Sinclair (1996) using a corpus of around 7.3 million words, the author makes the following observation about this verb’s grammatical subjects:

“The most striking feature of this phrasal verb is the nature of its subjects. In general, they refer to unpleasant states of affairs ... The main vocabulary is rot, decay, malaise, despair, ill-will, decadence, impoverishment, infection, prejudice, vicious (circle), rigor mortis, numbness, bitterness, mannerism, anticlimax, anarchy, disillusion, disillusionment, slump. Not one of these is conventionally desirable or attractive.” (Sinclair, 1991, pp. 74–75)

Later in the same work the author notes, within the framework of his idiom principle that “Many uses of words and phrases show a tendency to occur in a certain semantic

environment. For example, the word *happen* is associated with unpleasant things – accidents and the like.”

Sinclair’s reading of semantic prosody is to be understood within his model of the extended lexical unit, which integrates collocation, colligation, semantic preference, and semantic prosody. For example, Sinclair (1991, pp. 84–91) analyzes the lexical items (a) the naked eye, for which he posits a prosody of *difficulty* on account of its frequent co-occurrence with sequences such as barely visible to the, too faint to be seen with, invisible to, and (b) true feelings, for which he claims a prosody of *reluctance*, i.e., reluctance to express our true feelings, on account of co-occurrences such as will never reveal, prevents me from expressing, less open about showing, guilty about expressing. The pragmatic implications of semantic prosody are made explicit in the following:

A semantic prosody...is attitudinal, and on the pragmatic side of the semantics pragmatics continuum. It is thus capable of a wide range of realization, because in pragmatic expressions the normal semantic values of the words are not necessarily relevant. But once noticed among the variety of expressions, it is immediately clear that the semantic prosody has a leading role to play in the integration of an item with its surroundings. It expresses something close to the *function* of an item – it shows how the rest of the item is to be interpreted functionally. (Sinclair, 1991, pp. 87–88)

The term *semantic prosody* itself first gained currency in Louw (1993) and was based upon a parallel with Firth’s discussions of prosody in phonological terms. In this respect Firth was concerned with the way sounds transcend segmental boundaries. The exact realization of the phoneme /k/, for example, is dependent upon the sounds adjacent to it. The /k/ of cat is different from the /k/ of key, because during the realization of the consonant the mouth is already making provision to produce the next sound. Thus the /k/ of cat prepares to produce /æ/ rather than /i:/ or any other sound, by a process of *phonological coloring* (B. Louw, 1993, p. 158). In the same way, it has been claimed, an expression such as symptomatic of (ibid: 170) prepares (the hearer / reader) for what follows, in this case something undesirable (co-occurrences of symptomatic of in the corpus used by Louw include parental paralysis, management inadequacies, numerous disorders). Phonemes are influenced by the sounds which precede them as well as those which follow, and therefore the semantic analogy extends not only to words that appear after the keyword, but more generally to the keyword’s close surrounds. According to Louw (1993, p. 159), “the habitual collocates of the form set in

are capable of coloring it, so it can no longer be seen in isolation from its semantic prosody, which is established through the semantic consistency of its subjects". Hence (B. Louw, 1993) definition of semantic prosody as a "consistent aura of meaning with which a form is imbued by its collocations", with its implications of a transfer of meaning to a given lexical item from its habitual co-text. His examples of lexical items with prosodies include *utterly*, *bent on* and *symptomatic of*, for all of which he claims negative prosodies.

Regarding the empirical studies on semantic prosody, important contributions to the subject have also been made by (Partington, 1998, 2004; Stubbs, 1995, 2001, 2009; H. Wang & Wang, 2005; Wei, 2006). For instance, Wei (2006) did a noteworthy contrastive study of the semantic prosodic in the lexical combinations in the Chinese learners' English writings. She examined the semantic prosodies in the specialized texts of Chinese corpus, by observing behaviors of lexical items such as *cause*, *incur*, *utterly*, *probability* and *careers*. She reported that the verb *cause* in technical texts has a stronger negative prosody than the case in general English texts whereas the word *career* has a weaker or less obvious positive prosody than the case in general English texts. This study has been a pioneer for local researchers to carry out studies on semantic prosody. However, as Zhang (2010) maintains, this research was based on just one genre of technical texts and the result might be applied to English for special purposes but not to general English.

Hosseini-Maasoum (2013) seems to be among the pioneering semantic prosody studies in Iran. Through adopting Sinclair(1991) framework, the researcher extracted a set of Persian verbs from a corpus of 740000 words. The core lexical item was the Persian equivalent of the verb *cause* along with 14 related Persian verbs. The target items were extracted from the corpus in sentence level to have a reasonable context. In this way, 50 sentences were collected. The analysis of the data revealed that in 30 sentences, the target items were collocated with negative words, in nine sentences they were collocated with positive words, and in five sentences the target items were collocated with neutral words.

In the context of Iran, Hosseini-Maasoum (2014) was also set out to do a diachronically analyze the semantic prosody of some Persian lexical combinations (e.g., the verb *cause* and the related collocations) and near synonymies from two different historical eras. The analysis of the results revealed that the semantic prosody in some of the near synonymies of the verb *cause* and the related phrases or collocations have changed from positive to negative. Interestingly, they did not report any change from negative to positive prosody. Lin and

Chung (n.d.) analyzed the verb *challenge* using a web-based corpus containing some 1.5 million words. The analysis was carried out in two levels: collocations and sentences. The analysis of the data revealed that although this verb generally refers to doing a challenging task (e.g., pose a huge *challenge*, face a tremendous *challenge*), it sometimes has a positive prosody (e.g., set a simple *challenge*, ready to meet a *challenge*, bring an exciting *challenge*). An interesting finding was that the semantic prosody of a particular syntactic structure in broad units is distinctive. For instance, *challenge* as a noun had a more favorable prosody, such as *ready for the challenge*, while *challenging* as an adjective tended to occur in an unpleasant environment that suggested *causing or suffering from an extremely undesirable situation*. The researchers concluded that although *challenge* was found in the same category of words possessing negative senses, its prosody could be positive. These findings implied how *challenge* acquires positive or negative associations through its collocational environment.

Alrajhi (2019) studied the semantic prosody and semantic preference of four maximizers: *completely*, *entirely*, *totally*, and *utterly* in Saudi EFL learners' writings. The novelty of this study was the point that the results were compared to findings obtained by Partington (2004) in which the same maximizers were analyzed. Surprisingly, the results show a significant difference between the two studies. In Partington (2004), *utterly* was revealed as an unfavorable prosody whereas the other three maximizers appeared to have neutral prosody without any preference. However, in Alrajhi (2019), all four maximizers used in the learners' writings had a positive prosody. Another difference was that in Partington (2004) all the four maximizers exhibited a tendency to occur in the corpus with words related to absence, whereas the data collected from Arab learners' writings shows that students rarely used words that relate to absence with maximizers.

In a creative and interesting study, Hauser and Schwarz (2016) hypothesized that semantic prosody can affect evaluative inferences about related ambiguous concepts. In their study, participants inferred that an ambiguous medical outcome was more negative when it was *caused*, a verb with negative semantic prosody, than when it was *produced*, a synonymous verb with no semantic prosody. Participants filled in sentence fragments in a way that aligned with semantic prosody. The researchers concluded that semantic prosody could have a strong influence on evaluative judgment.

In a comparative study between English and Norwegian, Ebeling (2014) was set out to identify the negative semantic prosody of the word *cause* in a cross-linguistic perspective. She tried to measure the extent to which the most used Norwegian correspondences (translations and sources) share the negative semantic prosody of *cause*. To this end, both the noun and the verb uses of *cause* were analyzed to explore their semantic prosody and lexicogrammatical patterns; Norwegian translations were extracted in each case and served as translational mirrors in a similar analysis going from Norwegian originals into English translations.

The analysis of the data showed that there is no Norwegian correspondence that matches *cause* in terms of negative semantic prosody. For example, the most used verb translation *få* (x til å) ('get (x to)') was typically applied in neutral settings in original texts. Although the third-most common verb correspondence *føre til* ('lead to') preferred negative contexts, it was not used in such environments to the same degree as *cause*. Furthermore, *føre til* was most translated into lead to and not *cause*, suggesting that *føre til* and *cause* have different semantic prosodies.

## **2.4 Related Research on Hospitality**

So far most research has been focused on finding semantic prosody of different parts of speech words in language learning themes. However, it is crucial to know what we can do in other fields and also industries. There is a huge opportunity to examine hotel guests' ideas via online platforms. In addition, examining the semantic prosody present in hotel reviews on websites provides a deeper understanding of guests' feelings and experiences. This analysis empowers hoteliers and industry stakeholders to uncover valuable insights, going beyond the literal content of guests' remarks to discern the emotional implications and associations within their feedback. This comprehensive understanding is not only instrumental in evaluating guest contentment but also in enhancing service standards, adapting marketing strategies, and implementing operational improvements that directly address the emotional expectations and needs of guests.

### **2.4.1 Hotel Rating Systems**

Globally, there are over 100 formal and informal hotel rating systems, which are overseen by commercial entities, governmental bodies, or industry associations. In the 1960s, the World

Trade Organization aimed to establish a unified global rating system, but despite these efforts, hotels worldwide continue to adopt diverse rating assessments (as cited in Stringam & Gerdes, 2010).

Traditionally, the hotel and lodging industry has depended on these rating systems to convey quality to consumers. While rating systems differ globally, they have consistently relied on the evaluations of experts to assess hotels and other lodging accommodations. Historically, consumers had limited influence on hotel ratings, but the advent of the Internet has empowered them to share evaluations and ratings. Hotels now face challenges as they have limited control over consumer-generated ratings and word-of-mouth recommendations, as highlighted by the Cornell Center for Hospitality Research (2008). A hotel that receives high ratings from experts or governmental systems may still garner a low consumer rating, impacting the overall perception among potential guests. This shift has raised concerns among hoteliers (Cornell Center for Hospitality Research, 2008).(As cited in Stringam & Gerdes, 2010)

Despite the significance of hotel ratings, there is a scarcity of research in this area. Henley et al. (2004) (as cited in Stringam & Gerdes, 2010). discovered a correlation between hotel ratings and pricing strategies. Hotels anticipating improved ratings tended to increase room rates, while those expecting lower ratings reduced their rates.

#### **2.4.2 User-Generated Feedback**

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of a customer's sentiments toward a hotel, the most effective approach is to examine the content of the customer's remarks Lewis & Pizam, 1981; Pullman, McGuire, & Cleveland, 2005 (as cited in Stringam & Gerdes, 2010). Scrutinizing guest comments has been a longstanding practice for rectifying service and product omissions and errors, as well as optimizing hotel resources Kreck, 1998; Lockwood, 1994 (as cited in Stringam & Gerdes, 2010). Hoteliers have observed that the analysis of information from comment cards empowers them to make managerial decisions leading to enhanced service operations, increased hotel profitability, and heightened guest loyalty Ford & Bach, 1997; Lewis & Pizam, 1981; Shea & Roberts, 1998(as cited in Stringam & Gerdes, 2010).

### 2.4.3 Hotel Guest Satisfaction

Numerous studies have delved into the satisfaction of hotel guests and various attributes related to the hotel's products or services Atkinson, 1998; Berry, Zeithaml, & Parasuraman, 1990; Cardotte & Turgeon, 1988; Carneiro & Costa, 2001; Choi & Chu, 2001(as cited in Stringam & Gerdes, 2010). Researchers have identified factors such as a friendly front office staff, efficient check-in and check-out processes, and the availability of restaurant and bar services as key contributors to hotel satisfaction. On the other hand, features like recreational amenities, business services, and in-room minibars were found to have less influence on guest satisfaction Shanka & Taylor, 2003 (as cited in Stringam & Gerdes, 2010).

Online hotel reviews (as cited in İlkay EyiSüren et al., 2023), characterized by their authentic and purposeful communication, have garnered attention not only from discourse analysts but also from researchers across various disciplines. These reviews serve as a valuable source of data for a wide range of fields, with many researchers delving into their analysis for diverse purposes. Reviewers approach their evaluations with specific expectations in mind, making these reviews rich and valuable sources of information. On the other hand, discourse analysts are primarily interested in understanding how messages are conveyed and the strategies employed by writers when crafting reviews. One compelling reason for the interest of discourse analysts in online hotel reviews is that Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) data, which is readily available and easy to transcribe, allows researchers to delve into the natural language found online, offering a unique opportunity for linguistic analysis.

Ilkay EyiSüren et al. (2023) collected 344 online reviews written by native English-speaking US citizens on the well-known website Booking.com, focusing on reviews of five different hotels. Their aim was to determine which speech acts and adjectives were most used by the reviewers. The results revealed that the majority of reviews contained complaints about the services received, while approximately half of them (N=150) also included positive remarks about the services. Notably, the two most frequently utilized adjectives were *dirty* (N=133) and *clean* (N=59), which is a significant indication of the aspect of establishments that reviewers are most concerned with, as these adjectives represent opposing qualities. They believe that their findings are anticipated to be valuable for both hotel management and corpus linguists, as they provide insights into the expectations of potential travelers and how they employ language to convey their messages within this specific dataset.

Another interesting study in hospitality was done by (Alrawadieh & Law, 2018). This investigation involved a selection of 400 English-language reviews concerning the highest-rated hotels in Istanbul, Turkey, as per TripAdvisor's ranking system. The study employed a content analysis approach that combined inductive and deductive methods. The study aimed to leverage the abundance of unsolicited data available on Web 2.0 and travel-related user-generated content platforms to explore guests' perceptions, preferences, and behaviors. Focusing on online reviews, the research sought to identify the fundamental factors influencing guest satisfaction within lodging businesses. The outcomes indicated that guest satisfaction primarily hinged on the quality and size of rooms, coupled with the level of service offered by the staff. Additionally, the findings highlighted a tendency for relatively young European male travelers who stay as couples or with family to share their accommodation experiences in online spaces. This research enriched the existing body of knowledge regarding the factors influencing guest satisfaction by focusing on the analysis of online reviews. Differing from conventional research methodologies, this study claimed to contribute to the literature on guest satisfaction within the hotel industry by leveraging the influential impact of online word-of-mouth.

J. J. Zhang & Verma (2017) analyzed more than 95,000 reviews and ratings covering 99 independent, luxurious hotels and resorts underscores the pivotal role of consistent, exceptional service and well-equipped, comfortable rooms as the core components within the hotel industry. The investigation, based on reviews from prominent platforms such as TripAdvisor, Expedia, and Booking.com, revealed a strong correlation between consistently high-quality service and top ratings, contrasting with inconsistent service and subsequent lower ratings. Through quantitative examination, it was evident that service and room quality stood out as the most crucial aspects for these high-end properties, while other factors like facilities, location, and amenities held significantly less influence. Qualitative scrutiny of the language used in these reviews reaffirmed the paramount importance of service and rooms, both in high-rated and low-rated properties. Adjectives in highly rated reviews included terms like *friendly*, *helpful*, *excellent*, and *beautiful*, whereas words solely found in lower-rated reviews encompassed terms such as *didn't*, *bathroom*, *front desk*, and *price*, indicating potential issues leading to those lower ratings. The implications drawn from these findings can guide both high- and low-rated hotels' management, directing their focus away from distractions and emphasizing the fundamental objective of providing exceptional service and a restful stay.



Another study in the hospitality domain investigated user-generated feedback by analyzing over 60,648 comments from 10,537 hotels across the 100 largest U.S. cities, aiming to provide new insights for U.S. hoteliers (Stringam & Gerdes, 2010). It explored the correlation between user-assigned ratings and word-of-mouth comments, offering assistance in comprehending consumer-generated ratings and comments. The research aimed to pinpoint common concerns expressed by guests in online reviews and identify factors contributing to both high and low traveler-assigned ratings. By delving into the underlying issues shaping consumer perceptions, the study utilized data from publicly available hotel reviews on Expedia.com. The methodology involved extracting and analyzing 6,642 unique words from comments, using a two-step process to identify actionable terms, and employing a difference between proportions method for statistical analysis. The results showcased word frequencies, occurrence counts, and ranks for different traveler review ratings. In this study results, notably, issues related to cleanliness, such as dirt, smell, stain, and mold, were frequently mentioned in lower-rated comments but decreased significantly in higher-rated ones. Conversely, the word *clean* was more prevalent in higher-rated reviews. Travelers tended to express concerns about hotel room beds and bathrooms more frequently in lower-rated comments, with specific components like sheets, pillows, and bathroom amenities standing out. The analysis also identified words indicative of positive and negative experiences, with terms like *accommodating* and *attentive* associated with higher ratings, while words like *manager* were more common in lower-rated comments. Additionally, factors such as a hotel's location and convenience, especially terms like *airport*, *downtown*, and *shopping*, influenced higher ratings. Notably, breakfast was a consistently important consideration for travelers across all rating categories. Overall, the findings suggest that understanding and addressing cleanliness issues and enhancing service elements contribute to improved guest satisfaction and higher ratings.

# CHAPTER 3

## DATA AND METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

Websites, social media, and various business applications have emerged as prominent outlets for customers to express their emotions and feelings about specific topics. Likewise, sentiment analysis is gaining popularity among businesses due to the vast amount of opinionated content and data available by customers. Sentiment (Lai & Raheem, 2020), which can be described as a person's feeling, opinion, or emotion, is a fundamental aspect of sentiment analysis. This analysis involves categorizing reviews as either positive, negative, or neutral. Sentiment analysis has gained significance as a research area for processing textual data and deriving valuable insights, such as comprehending customers' sentiments towards hotels and their features. By analyzing guest feedback through sentiment analysis, hotel owners are empowered to make informed decisions and take actionable steps based on this data.

These written narratives can be sentimentally classified as positive, negative, or neutral. Customer reviews play an essential role in influencing not only potential but also existing customers. They enable hotels to grasp their position in a competitive environment and understand customer perspectives on various hotel attributes. This understanding empowers them to enhance their role and maintain a competitive and robust role in the market.

Judgments and opinions are crucially expressed through evaluative adjectives, such as disappointing, fantastic, etc. Furthermore, the positive or negative values of such adjectives are sharpened through maximizing adverbs, as in utterly disappointing. Such adverbs are the focus of the present study. Specifically, the following maximizers were selected for the current investigation:

1. Utterly
2. Completely

3. Totally
4. Entirely
5. Terribly

To conduct the present study, all the words from previous studies are extracted, listed and selected. The list contains about 5 adverbial maximizers. The studies mostly focus on the semantic prosody of these words individually. Several studies do the comparison between English and another language regarding semantic prosody (Ebeling, 2014; Partington, 1998; H. Wang & Wang, 2005; Q. Wang, 2004) some researchers use corpora to study the words such as (Hauser & Schwarz, 2016), however, I choose adverbs, particularly maximizers because they are more interesting to me among all parts of speech. In addition, it is worth mentioning to explain to some extent about corpus linguistics first.

### **3.2 Corpus Linguistics**

Corpus linguistics (as cited in Motlagh & Nezhad, 2021), often referred to as computer-aided linguistics, is the examination of language through extensive collections of real-life words. Linguistic data from everyday language usage is compiled in corpora, which are specialized databases created for linguistic and broader language-related research. This field is also known as corpus-based studies. In corpus linguistics, linguists investigate language in corpora, which are representative samples of language used in spoken and written contexts across various genres.

Corpus linguistics serves as a versatile tool for exploring specific aspects of language and employs a set of methods applicable to various domains of English language study, including translation studies, language acquisition, and all branches of linguistic research. Researchers can also leverage corpora to test theories requiring analysis with large samples or case studies.

According to McEnery (2001) corpus linguistics has experienced a notable resurgence in recent years. Initially, it was a somewhat marginalized approach primarily used within English linguistics, particularly in studies related to English grammar. However, corpus linguistics has expanded its horizons. As he mentioned, corpus linguistics is a dynamic field, with researchers applying corpus-based methods to address a wide range of linguistic

research questions. Moreover, corpus linguistics has become increasingly multilingual, encompassing the study of various languages and their numerous varieties using corpus data.

For now, we can describe corpus linguistics simply as the examination of language based on real-life language usage examples. This approach has a rich and lengthy history, although the term *corpus linguistics* itself is relatively modern. Corpus linguistics has become a prevalent methodology in linguistics, despite facing resistance in the 1960s and 1970s. Numerous misconceptions surround corpus linguistics, which is rather surprising considering it is merely a research methodology. Its history has almost become a form of academic folklore (McEnery, 2001).

Regarding whether corpus linguistics is a subfield of linguistics, the answer is both yes and no. Corpus linguistics is not a subfield of linguistics in the same way that syntax, semantics, sociolinguistics, and others are. These disciplines focus on describing or explaining specific aspects of language. In contrast, corpus linguistics is a methodology rather than a subject of language in need of explanation or description. A corpus-based approach can be applied to various aspects of linguistic investigation, including syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, to name a few. Corpus linguistics is a method that can be used across nearly any linguistic area but does not inherently define a distinct area of linguistics.(McEnery, 2001)

Nonetheless, corpus linguistics allows us to differentiate between approaches to the study of language. In that sense, it does delineate an area within linguistics, or at least various methodological approaches within linguistic subfields. For instance, we can distinguish between corpus-based syntax and non-corpus-based syntax, as well as between corpus-based semantics and non-corpus-based semantics. Therefore, while corpus linguistics is not an independent field of linguistic inquiry, it does enable us to discern methodological approaches used within the same area of study by different researchers or studies.(McEnery, 2001)

Early corpus linguistics refers to the period of linguistics that predates the emergence of Chomsky's theories. When we discuss early corpus linguistics, we imply that linguistics before Chomsky had a corpus-like nature, although this statement is both accurate and not entirely accurate. The dominant methodological approach in linguistics just before Chomsky's influence was primarily based on the observation of language use. However, it is important to note that the debate that Chomsky reintroduced in linguistics was an age-old one. During this time, although the label *corpus linguistics* was not in use, and later on some

linguists following the structuralist tradition employed a fundamental approach that we can undoubtedly characterize as corpus-based as cited in (McEnery 2001). This approach involved starting with a substantial collection of recorded language utterances, known as the corpus, and subjecting it to a systematic, step-by-step, bottom-up analysis. The corpus served as the foundation for the methodological approach in linguistics before Chomsky's era in the twentieth century. Subsequently, this methodology encountered challenges as the associated linguistic frameworks were abandoned. It is important to clarify that the term *corpus linguistics* was not used in texts and studies from this era.

In other words, corpus linguistics is the study of language using large databases of naturally occurring languages, known as corpora. It used to be in competition with linguistic approaches that relied on theoretical insights and linguists' intuitions. However, in recent years, there has been more cooperation and mutual influence, partly due to the user-friendliness of corpus linguistics tools. (Brysbaert et al., 2017) For instance, when people search for a specific phrase on an internet search engine, they are essentially conducting a form of corpus linguistics by examining a vast collection of webpages for the presence of certain words or word combinations. Moreover, theoretical ideas play a crucial role in corpus linguistics, as corpus searches are most informative when they test predictions based on linguistic theories.

Psycholinguists frequently use corpus linguistics, particularly for word frequency measures. High-frequency words are processed more efficiently than low-frequency words, and these frequency norms, used in selecting research materials, are derived from corpus linguistics. The creation of a balanced one-million-word corpus by Kucera and Francis in 1967 and the word counts based on it have significantly impacted research on word recognition in English.

Corpus analysis has also influenced research on sentence parsing, initially by determining which constructions were observed and their relative frequencies. Nowadays, it is increasingly used to train computational models for sentence parsing. Another valuable application of corpus analysis is the calculation of semantic similarity measures based on word co-occurrences.

The fundamental presumptions within corpus linguistics vary slightly among studies, primarily based on whether a researcher focuses on language production or perception. For researchers studying language production, the corpus represents the material to be examined, with the aspiration to obtain the largest possible collection of spontaneously generated

content. These contents might include written texts, but more often comprise spoken discourse. This prevalence is due to a greater interest among researchers in speech production rather than writing, as well as the fact that written texts are frequently revised before publication—though exceptions exist, such as online subtitled television programs or chat interactions. The reasoning behind this methodology is that the corpus constitutes a comprehensive sample of language produced, enabling analysis to uncover the underlying processes involved in language production.

Corpus linguistics tools have become more user-friendly owing to the increasing computational capacity of computers. Nowadays, desktop and laptop computers can perform analyses that previously demanded supercomputers just a few decades ago. The main obstacle to utilizing corpus linguistics lies in the requirement for computer programming skills. With corpora now containing billions of words or sentences, automated algorithms are necessary for processing the data. This reliance on automated processing establishes a significant connection between corpus linguistics and natural language processing (NLP) research in computer science departments, aiming to enhance computers' linguistic capabilities by assimilating vast amounts of information, primarily text-based, though initial uses of visual materials have been documented.

There is a growing availability of libraries containing algorithms and software packages, enabling users to execute programs without an in-depth understanding of their inner workings. This trend mirrors how statistical packages facilitate complex analyses without requiring expertise in matrix algebra (referred to as the application of recipe knowledge by Schütz in 1962 (as cited in Brysbaert et al., 2017)). Presently, R and Python are two popular programming languages. Depending on the required information, direct searches within a corpus may suffice. This approach is suitable when investigating the occurrence of specific words or word sequences. However, in many cases, deeper analysis is necessary, particularly when exploring syntactic structures or obtaining part-of-speech details associated with the words. As an example, a word frequency list collects every occurrence of a specific word within a provided dataset. Although there are many resources for conducting corpus analysis, two of the most extensive and commonly utilized ones are COCA, the Corpus of Contemporary American Language (<http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>) and COHA, the Corpus of Historical American English (<https://www.english-corpora.org/coha/>). I will explain more in detail why I have not used these two as corpora in my research.

One significant drawback of corpora is the prevalent imposition of copyright restrictions, primarily due to the fact that the materials used were created by individuals or entities who didn't grant copyright permissions to the creators of the corpora. This challenge often arises from the sheer volume of contributors involved, making the transfer of copyright unfeasible. Concerns over potential copyright violations lead researchers to be exceedingly cautious about sharing their corpora with peers, resulting in the necessity for multiple research groups to independently construct new corpora. This reluctance to share impedes the collective accumulation of information and the reproduction of research findings.

Derived data presents a more favorable scenario, typically accessible for research purposes and more manageable to work with. Since derived data does not impede the authors' commercial rights, they avoid infringing on intellectual property and align with the principles of 'fair use of a copyrighted work.' Often, this information is available in a basic format, such as a spreadsheet (e.g., Excel), accessible to individuals with rudimentary computer skills. On occasion, if the list is extensive, slightly more advanced software may be necessary for handling it.

Moreover, language corpora are not confined solely to spoken and written words; they can also encompass gestures. These gestures might substitute for speech, particularly in cases involving mute or deaf individuals, or they may complement spoken language.

The necessary size of a quality corpus depends on its intended use. If the aim is to collect word frequencies, then a corpus comprising around 20-50 million words should suffice according to Brysbaert & New (as cited in Brysbaert et al., 2017). If one also seeks reliable part-of-speech data for less common words, a larger corpus becomes necessary. Moreover, if the researcher desires information about word co-occurrences, especially for less frequent word combinations, larger corpora are recommended.

In addition to size, the language style of the corpus is critically important, especially when predicting performance in psycholinguistic experiments. Generally, measurements based on the language exposure of study participants are more reliable than those derived from scientific or non-fiction sources.

The decision to utilize Booking.com or Tripadvisor as corpora rather than COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English) in my study is driven by several factors:

Firstly, both Booking.com and Tripadvisor.com contain text exclusively centered around hotel reviews, aligning more closely with the objectives and focus of my research. The language employed in hotel reviews on these platforms is expected to be more domain-specific, offering valuable insights into the utilization of adverbial maximizers within the context of hospitality and accommodation. Secondly, the analysis of adverbial maximizers within the realm of hotel reviews on Booking.com or Tripadvisor enables the capture of nuanced language and preferences unique to the hospitality industry. This contextual relevance is imperative for comprehending the intricate functions of these linguistic elements within the specific domain of travel and accommodation. Thirdly, both Booking.com and Tripadvisor provide extensive datasets of hotel reviews, presenting a substantial volume of text for in-depth analysis. This abundance of data is advantageous for a comprehensive exploration of semantic prosody and adverbial maximizers in the context of customer opinions about hotels. Fourthly, given that my research aims to offer practical insights or recommendations for the hospitality industry, the use of Booking.com and Tripadvisor data proves to be more directly applicable. The findings derived from a domain-specific corpus, such as those obtained from Booking.com, may hold immediate relevance for businesses in the travel and hospitality sector.

Conversely, if my research questions or objectives necessitated a broader exploration of language usage across various domains, genres, and contexts, COCA might be a more suitable choice. COCA encompasses a diverse range of texts from different sources and genres, providing a more general perspective on English language usage.

Ultimately, the selection between Booking.com or Tripadvisor and COCA hinges on the specific goals and scope of the research. It is crucial to carefully consider the context, relevance, and applicability of the data to the research questions when making this decision. Therefore, aligning with the objectives of my thesis, I opted for Booking.com and Tripadvisor as my chosen corpora.



### 3.3 Data Sources

Online reviews about hotels, restaurants, movies, etc. represent an invaluable tool for the industry to gain insights into customers' perspectives and preferences, as well as to advertise their offerings. These reviews are published on the websites of service providers, so they are easily accessible to a wide audience. Such channels facilitate prompt feedback from guests and are a source for future customers trying to make informed decisions when selecting a hotel, restaurant, etc. At the same time, the chance for customers to express their thoughts openly is extremely valuable feedback to the service providers. It is obviously interesting for providers to gain an overview of how many positive and negative reviews there are. Sentiment analysis, the automatic classification of documents into positive and negative ones, has therefore received quite a bit of attention in the past decade.

As part of the research efforts in this field, researchers have collected reviews in certain areas from websites and have made them available on public research platforms such as Kaggle (<https://www.kaggle.com/datasets>). As a result, several datasets with review texts, together with metadata labels (such as time, place, rating, etc.) can be downloaded in standard tabular formats by other researchers and used in subsequent research and teaching. This has spurred researchers to investigate, for instance, if the star ratings of reviews can be established automatically from the review texts. This is an attractive option for obtaining data sources for the present research purposes.

In order to obtain a sufficient number of hotel review texts containing the specific words that are under investigation, datasets with a large number of hotel reviews were needed. It was also desirable that most reviews were written in English, but non-English reviews would not matter anyway since they would not contain the selected words.

A preliminary look at datasets on Kaggle suggested that reviews from TripAdvisor and Booking.com were big enough. Both service providers are leading mediators for hotel accommodation.

TripAdvisor.com is recognized as the leading destination for impartial travel evaluations, offering authentic insights into hotels, attractions, and restaurants worldwide. It features an impressive database of over 1,926,031 unbiased reviews, continuously updated by genuine travelers. This platform provides invaluable insider tips and highlights the top travel deals for your chosen dates (Litvin et al., 2008).

In addition, Tripadvisor and Booking.com primarily have user-generated reviews of accommodations, including hotels, rentals, and other lodging options which mostly focus on travel experiences, accommodations, and customer satisfaction with services and amenities. While containing valuable information, the reviews might vary significantly in terms of length, language quality (more colloquial), and specific topics discussed. In addition, reviews come from a diverse range of travelers, contributing to variations in language use, preferences, and cultural contexts. However, these corpora likely contain a significant amount of domain-specific language related to the hospitality industry. Using Booking.com or Tripadvisor as a corpus provides more industry-specific, user-generated, and sentiment-rich data . With knowing all limitations of user-generated corpora like booking.com and Tripadvisor, my interest in hospitality convinced me to do research using these sources.

The following datasets were downloaded and combined.

1. 515,000 customer reviews of 1493 luxury hotels across Europe by Jiashen Liu, scraped from Booking.com.

The format is CSV, and the text does not contain punctuation in text, which does not really matter much. All items are marked as positive or negative.

<https://www.kaggle.com/datasets/jiashenliu/515k-hotel-reviews-data-in-europe>

2. 878,561 reviews from 4333 hotels crawled from TripAdvisor by Joakim Arvidsson, provided in Json format. Ratings 1–5 and other metadata are included. Some reviews are written in other languages than English.

<https://www.kaggle.com/datasets/joebeachcapital/hotel-reviews>.

Also, at <https://www.cs.cmu.edu/~jiweil/html/hotel-review.html> (with thanks to Myle Ott)

To what extent each user rating correlates with the content of the user review, is an interesting question, but it is not a topic of the present study. In order to achieve consistent binary ratings and to allow a balanced selection of data items, the ratings in the TripAdvisor dataset were converted so that 1 and 2 were relabeled as 0 (negative) and 4 and 5 were relabeled as 1 (positive), while reviews rated as 3 were discarded. Some reviews from Booking.com were very short, so reviews shorter than seven words were discarded.

### 3.4 Data Selection and Processing

For each of the chosen maximizers, 150 positive and 150 negative reviews containing that maximizer were selected from the material and combined, resulting in five balanced datasets. Table 1 shows the original and selected keyword counts.

*Table 1: Number of reviews and selected reviews with keywords*

<i>keyword</i>	<i>neg/pos review polarity</i>	<i>absolute counts</i>	<i>normalized (proportions)</i>	<i>selected items</i>
utterly	0	327	0.54	150
	1	275	0.46	150
totally	0	6719	0.67	150
	1	3269	0.33	150
entirely	0	991	0.66	150
	1	514	0.34	150
completely	0	7536	0.59	150
	1	5145	0.41	150
terribly	0	1006	0.52	150
	1	930	0.48	150

The numbers in Table 1 reveal that for each keyword, the total number of reviews with negative polarity containing that keyword was higher than the number with positive polarity. The keyword with the least difference between negative and positive was *terribly*. We will come back to the special character of this maximizer later.

Because some reviews were quite lengthy, a *kwic* index was computed that showed the keywords in their immediate contexts. Next, the author meticulously examined the *kwic* lines (and sometimes the whole review) and annotated each use of the maximizer as being combined in a negative, neutral, or positive collocating phrase (usually the immediately following adjective). The rating of the whole reviews was ignored in this phase, as this part of the study is focused on collocation, which is a defining characteristic of the adverb's semantic prosody. This annotation resulted in the extension of the dataset. The next chapter will discuss the analysis of this annotated dataset..

# CHAPTER 4

## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

### 4.1 Overview of Counts

The distribution of positive and negative collocations, as marked in the manual annotation, was computed for each maximizer, as shown in Table 2. The total row at the bottom provides the total number of occurrences for each sentiment category across all keywords. For terribly, ten reviews were excluded in which terribly was not used as a maximizing adverb, but was used as an adverb with a negative meaning by itself.

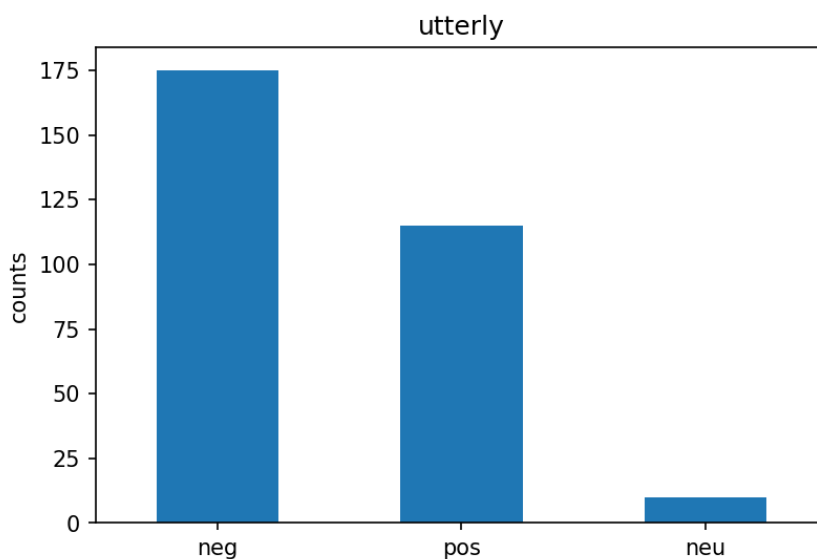
*Table 2: Polarity of collocates*

<i>keyword</i>	<i>negative</i>	<i>positive</i>	<i>neutral</i>	<i>Total</i>
utterly	175	115	10	300
totally	136	128	36	300
entirely	109	99	92	300
completely	150	98	52	300
terribly	206	80	4	290
<i>Total</i>	<i>776</i>	<i>520</i>	<i>194</i>	<i>1590</i>

There were 776 occurrences of negative sentiment, 520 occurrences of positive sentiment, and 194 occurrences of neutral sentiment in the dataset. Frequency lists for every maximizer and every collocating word, grouped by value (negative, positive, or neutral) are given in the Appendices. From the numbers in Table 2 and from the frequency lists, it can be seen that the different maximizers have different semantic prosody. Some tend more towards extremes than others. The findings for maximizers will be discussed in the next sections.

## 4.2 Utterly

Figure 1: Collocates value of *utterly*



As it can be seen in *Table 2* and *Figure 1*, a large majority (175) collocating words out of 300 are negative, signaling aspects of dissatisfaction or disappointment with the hotel experience. In addition, very few collocates are neutral. This suggests that *utterly* is not only maximizing, but also strongly polarizing.

A frequency list of the collocates is given in appendices. Many of the words in the list are strong and intensify the negative sentiment when combined with *utterly*. For instance, *utterly disgusting* or *utterly disappointed* emphasize the extremeness of the negative sentiment.

The list includes a wide variety of negative descriptors (appendix 1), ranging from feelings of disappointment and disgust to descriptions of poor service (*unprofessional, incompetent*) and negative physical conditions (*filthy, chaos*).

Words like *disappointed* and *disgusting* appear multiple times, indicating that certain negative descriptors are more commonly associated with *utterly* in the reviews.

In summary, I can claim that when the word *utterly* is used in hotel reviews on TripAdvisor and Booking.com, it is frequently combined with strongly negative descriptors. Guests seem to use *utterly* to emphasize their extreme dissatisfaction or disappointment with various aspects of their hotel experience. The presence of these negative words implies a consistently negative semantic prosody associated with *utterly* in this context.

The reviews consist of words that cover various aspects of the hotel experience, including cleanliness, food quality, staff service, and overall ambiance. There is a total of 115 positive semantic prosody (appendix 2) consisting of 67 different adjectives indicating various aspects of positivity that guests associate with hotels. The words include a wide range of positive descriptors for hotels. For example, *charming*, *comfortable*, *clean*, *delicious*, *perfect*, *fantastic*, *immaculate*, and *lovely* suggest positive attributes related to the hotel's condition and ambiance.

Words like *helpful*, *courteous*, *friendly*, *welcomed*, and *cared* suggest positive interactions with hotel staff, indicating a positive customer service experience.

Some adjectives reflect the positive emotions and experiences of guests during their stay like *gorgeous*, *modern*, *stunning*, *luxurious*, and *elegant* highlight the aesthetics and atmosphere of the hotel, emphasizing positive qualities.

Words like *delightful*, *wonderful*, *amazed*, *pleased*, and *happy* or words such as *amazing*, *outstanding*, *spotless*, *flawless*, *extraordinary*, and *superb* underscore the exceptional quality and excellence of the hotel.

With this information, I can conclude that when guests use *utterly* in this context, they tend to emphasize extremely positive aspects of their hotel experience. These words collectively contribute to a highly positive semantic prosody associated with *utterly* in the context of hotel reviews on TripAdvisor and booking.com.

The 10 words that appear alongside *utterly* in my dataset with a neutral semantic prosody include the following terms (see also Appendix 3).

1. *Unbelievable* implies a sense of surprise or astonishment but does not inherently carry a positive or negative emotion. In hotel reviews, it might suggest that something exceeded expectations without specifying whether it was good or bad.

e.g., *Simply*, and *utterly unbelievable*.

2. Preposition *to* does not possess any inherent emotion. It was used as a preposition of the prepositional verb *adhered ... to*.

3. Also I can say that *Suggest* is a neutral verb commonly used to indicate a recommendation or proposal. It does not inherently express a positive or negative sentiment.

e.g., I fully and utterly suggest to you to stay at this great establishment.

4. *Silent* as an adjective typically describes something as quiet or lacking noise. It does not strongly imply a positive or negative feeling on its own.

e.g., It was utterly silent every night - thank you, Hotel Triton.

5. *Confirmed* implies that something has been verified or proven to be true, generally presenting a neutral statement. So, I mark it as a neutral semantic prosody, too.

e.g., This sensation is utterly confirmed when entering the room, with all the right things in the right places.

6. *Without*: Similar to *to*, *without* is a preposition and does not inherently convey any sentiment. It functions as a neutral prosody in sentences.

e.g., The staff is incredibly helpful and welcoming and utterly without any of the "hipper than thou" attitude common in urban boutique hotels.

7. some words such as *Amazed*, *astonishing* (can suggest surprise or amazement), *amazing*, *Stunning* (often indicates something as visually impressive or beautiful), but they can also be used neutrally to describe something that is simply striking or remarkable.

e.g. It was utterly astonishing that the evidence was clear as day, but the Assistant GM denied everything and no one from the Valet staff admitted their mistake. (Negative review)

e.g., have been so extremely upset and utterly amazed about how horrible of an experience my partner and I had in your hotel. (Negative review)

e.g., We have an older hotel that could be utterly stunning, but has instead had minimal, cheap fixes---so the result is complete ghetto.

e.g., If I had to choose one thing that was not utterly amazing If we had been there for more than one night, then I think tea coffee making facilities in the rooms would have been good

In summary, although some of the words in the examples can indicate surprise or amazement, they do not inherently carry a strongly positive or negative semantic prosody. Their interpretation often depends on the context within the hotel reviews.

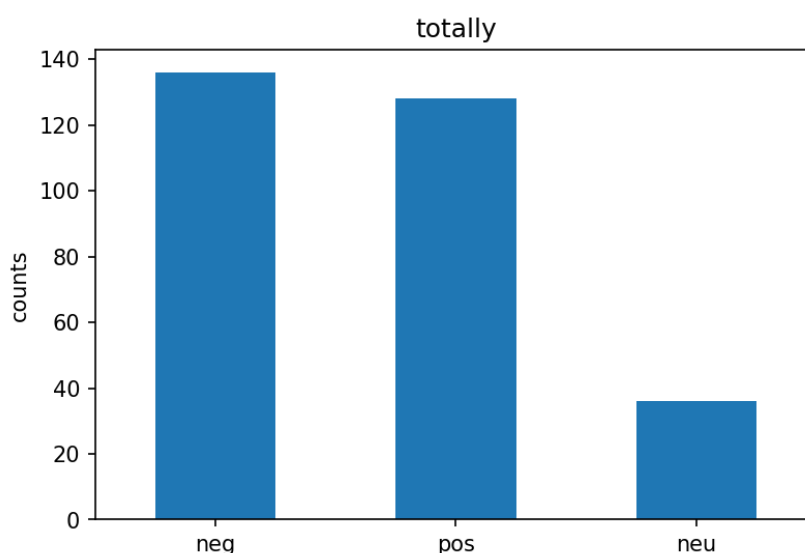
### 4.3 Totally

*Totally* functions as an extreme intensifier adverb in this research called as maximizer, particularly in specific situations. Its primary role is to underscore the degree of extremeness or completeness in an action or description. Whether it is accompanied by more positive or negative semantic prosody words hinges on its usage within a particular context.

The dataset of hotel reviews *totally* relates to both positive and negative semantic prosody words in somehow the same level (see Appendix 4,5,6). When it is used with positive terms such as *recommend*, *worth*, *safe*, and *impressed*, it heightens the positive sentiment, signaling strong approval or satisfaction. Conversely, when combined with negative words like *inadequate*, *unacceptable*, *ruined*, and *disgusting*, it accentuates the negative sentiment, underscoring extreme discontent or disappointment.

Briefly, I can claim that *totally* is versatile and can amplify both positive and negative but less neutral semantic prosody. Its specific prosody depends on the words it accompanies in a given context. It serves as a versatile modifier to emphasize the extremeness of various emotions or evaluations in hotel reviews and other forms of communication. I look more into the examples as follows:

Figure 2: Collocates value of *totally*



As the graph indicates 136 words collocated *totally* out of 300 reviews convey negative semantic prosody. They describe various aspects of the hotel experience that guests found unsatisfactory or disappointing. Examples include *inadequate*, *unacceptable*, *ignored*, *ruined*,



*messed*, and more. Many of the words intensify the negative sentiment when combined with *totally*. For instance, *totally inadequate* or *totally unacceptable* emphasizes the extremeness of the negative experience. Also, there is a wide variety of negative descriptors, ranging from feelings of disappointment and frustration to descriptions of poor service (*unhelpful, ineffective*) and negative conditions (*unsafe, dirty*).

Some words appear multiple times, indicating that certain negative words are more commonly collocated with *totally* in hotel reviews. For example, *inadequate* and *unacceptable* appear six times each, suggesting they are frequently used by guests to express their dissatisfaction.

The reviews in my dataset include specific complaints like *overpriced, forgotten, incompetent, and unsafe*, highlighting the specific issues that guests encountered during their stay.

eg. Low Budget Hotel totally overpriced The rooms are plenty of construction mistakes and of very poor quality.

eg. We decided to drive and realize that the walk is along a busy highway with a very narrow sidewalk. This is totally unsafe especially if you have kids or at night returning from the park.

The data with positive semantic prosody includes a diverse range of positive descriptors, such as *recommend, worth, safe, satisfied, welcome*, and so on which show that guests had enjoyable and satisfactory experiences during their hotel stays.

Some words appear with relatively high frequency, indicating that they are commonly used in hotel reviews to convey positive sentiments. For example, *recommend* eleven times and *worth* ten times, *safe* seven times, suggesting that guests frequently endorse and find value in the hotels they review.

e.g., I would totally recommend this hotel to anyone traveling to Denver!

e.g., All in all, the place was much more than we thought it would be and it is something we totally recommend.

e.g., totally recommend great value for money.

e.g., the immediate area is *totally safe*, and I felt fine as a single woman walking around alone at night.

e.g., It is *totally worth* it!

Some words, such as *delicious*, *accommodating*, and *renovated*, provide specific praise for features or services offered by the hotels. This indicates that guests appreciated and enjoyed these aspects.

The words with more frequency in neutral connotation were *different* (6 times) and *unexpected* (3 times). The term *different* is considered to have a neutral semantic prosody because it does not inherently carry a positive or negative connotation on its own. Instead, its interpretation largely depends on the context in which it is used. It might be used to describe various aspects of a hotel stay. For instance, a guest might mention that their experience at a particular hotel was different from what they expected, without specifying whether it was better or worse. This term simply suggests a deviation from the norm or from one's expectations, and the interpretation of *different* as positive, negative, or neutral depends on the additional information provided in the review.

e.g., The room was *totally different* than the photo on booking.com. it was even not suitable for single occupancy.

e.g., What it did give me however was a perspective on two *totally different* rooms.

In the context of hotel reviews, *unexpected* can be used to describe various aspects of a hotel stay. For example, a guest might mention that they had an unexpected upgrade to a nicer room or that the hotel offered unexpected amenities or services. In this case, *unexpected* would be interpreted positively because it suggests a pleasant surprise. Conversely, *unexpected* could also be used in a negative context. For instance, a guest might say that they had an unexpected problem or inconvenience during their stay. In this case, *unexpected* would be interpreted negatively because it implies an unwelcome surprise. The neutrality of *unexpected* arises from its capacity to describe events or experiences without inherently attributing a positive or negative value to them. The sentiment associated with *unexpected* is determined by the specific circumstances and context in which it is used.

e.g., I was traveling alone, they put me in what other 4 star hotels call a junior suite, *totally unexpected!*

e.g., The wine and chocolate strawberries were totally unexpected and very much appreciated.

## 4.4 Entirely

As figure 3 shows, it is interesting to say that unlike other maximizers, *entirely* had a more balanced collocation in positive, negative, and neutral. In my opinion, compared with other maximizers, *entirely* itself is relatively neutral. It does not inherently carry a positive or negative connotation. Instead, it serves as an adverb that can modify the degree or extent of something. The balance in the semantic prosody of *entirely* might be due to its adaptability to different contexts and its ability to emphasize the completeness of an experience, regardless of whether that experience is positive, negative, or neutral.

The balanced nature of *entirely* in its associations with positive, negative, and neutral meanings is interesting. While similar intensifiers might carry a more biased connotation, *entirely* tends to present a more even distribution of these associations, making it a versatile tool for emphasizing completeness without overtly influencing the sentiment of the description.

The overall sentiment is determined by the specific context and the words that *entirely* modifies in a given statement. It is also worth mentioning that neutral words were more than positive words collocating *entirely*. The keyword with high frequency was *different* (19 times) and also *non-smoking/smoke-free* (9 times), preposition *on* (8 times) used after *entirely* in reviews (appendix 9). I looked at the examples again on the preposition *on* and figured out that all reviews which followed *entirely* with *on* were the phrase *Based entirely on something*. It does not inherently carry positive or negative connotations. It indicates a complete reliance without evaluating the merit or quality of the factor it is based on. therefore, I mark it as neutral in my study.

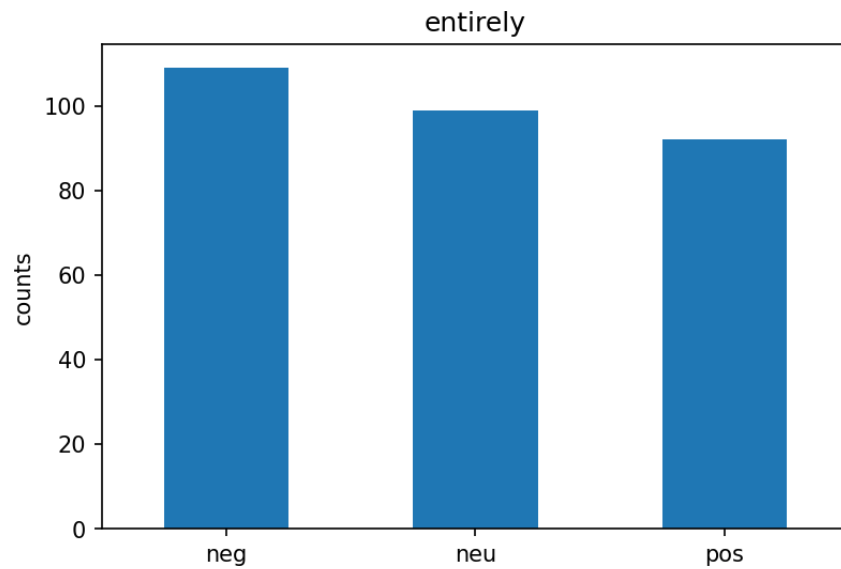
For instance:

e.g., Upon calling Reservations, I was quoted an *entirely different* (higher) price than my Texas colleague for the very same room.

e.g., It ranks in an *entirely different* class than other hotels we have stayed in.

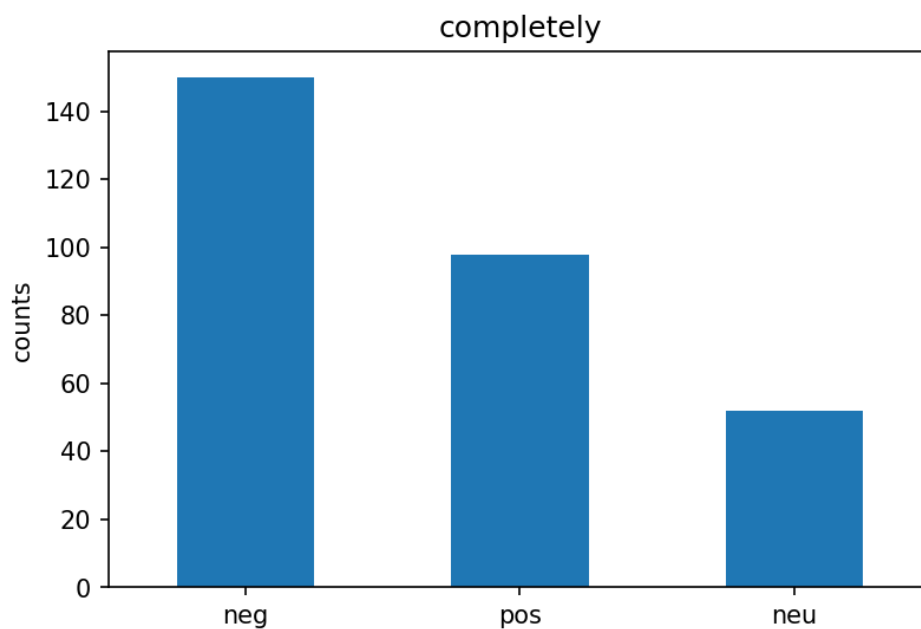
eg. We booked the hotel based entirely on Tripadvisor reviews. ( prepositional phrase almost all of them was for the phrasal verb *based on*)

Figure 3: Collocates value of *entirely*



## 4.5 Completely

Figure 4: Collocates value of *completely*



It was notable in figure 4 that half of the reviews consisting *completely* had negative connotations in the reviews. Among all, *ruined*, *ignored*, *unacceptable*, *blocked*, and *overpriced* had the most frequency in order (appendix 10). They described characteristics and conditions that were typically viewed as undesirable or problematic in hotel reviews.

In contrast as it is shown in (appendix 11), words like *safe*, *renovated*, *satisfied*, *enjoyed*, *comfortable*, and *impressed* had a positive prosody in collocation with *completely*. These words are positive in their nature and also almost all of them appeared in positive reviews.

The same as other maximizers, the keyword *different* was used (9 times) with *completely* as neutral (appendix 12). As it was mentioned before *different* often considered neutral because it is a versatile term that describes variation or distinctiveness without inherently attaching a value judgment to it. Its meaning and connotation are context-dependent and can vary based on the specific circumstances and the individual's perspective. It is interesting to mention that preposition *off* after this maximizer are mostly a part of a phrasal verb with negative meaning such as *came off*, or *turn off*.

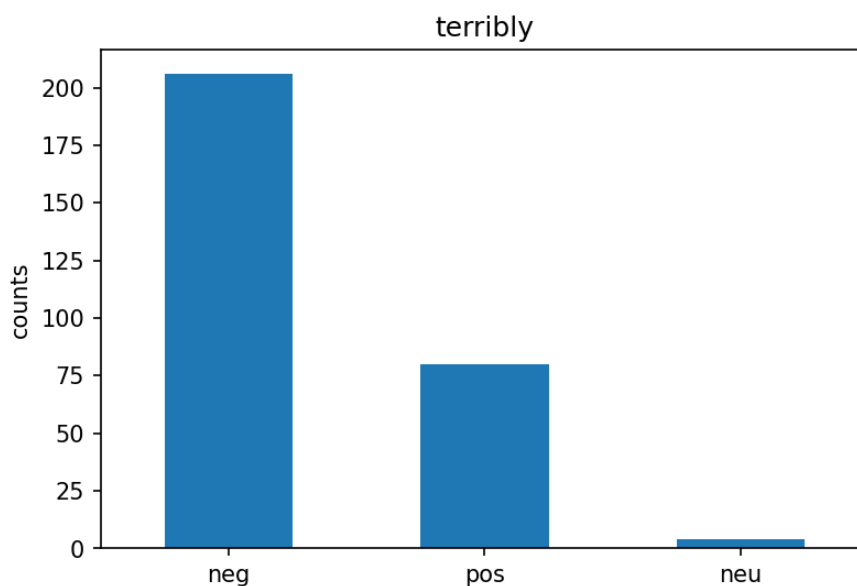
e.g., For a regular rate us US\$ 200/night definitely completely overpriced.

e.g., The bottom "fitted" sheet was not pulled fully onto the mattress so by the simple act of sitting on the side of the bed, the sheet came completely off.

e.g.,the sink couldn't be turned completely off no matter how hard I tried.

## 4.6 Terribly

Figure 5: Collocates value of terribly



The most noticeable maximizer in my study was *terribly*. As you can see in figure 5 More than 70 percent of the keywords had negative semantic prosody. So, this proved that *terribly* is an extreme maximizer which takes the existing degree of an attribute or condition and pushes it to its extreme. However, it is important to note that the use of *terribly* often carries a negative connotation because it implies an overwhelmingly negative quality or experience. For instance, *terribly disappointing* suggests an exceptionally disappointing experience.

The high frequency keywords collocated with *terribly* in the reviews were *disappointed, small, uncomfortable, noisy, slow, and expensive*. (Appendix 13) In these examples *terribly* conveyed a sense of extreme displeasure, discomfort, or disappointment. Therefore, it naturally pairs with words that already have a negative connotation to make the negativity even more pronounced.

However, it is worth noting that *terribly* can also be used with positive words, although less frequently. When it is used with positive words, it usually serves to emphasize the extreme positivity or excellence of a situation. For example, as it is shown in (appendix 14) *terribly friendly* which is used 7 times in reviews means that the people in a certain situation were exceptionally and remarkably friendly. *Terribly comfortable* indicates an extraordinary level of comfort and satisfaction. In such cases, *terribly* is used to highlight and intensify the positive attributes or experiences, similar to how it is used with negative words to intensify

the negative attributes. The key is that terribly is an intensifier, and its specific connotation (positive or negative) depends on the words it modifies. This can be one way of clarifying the usage of positive adjectives with *terribly*. However, in this research, in the majority of sentences which consisted of positive adjectives, negation before terribly changed the meaning of the sentence. By analyzing the data, I can conclude that *terribly* comes most often with a negative adjective or negative connotation after it or with a negation before and a positive adjective after it.

e.g., staff *weren't terribly friendly*.

e.g. When we checked in the two ladies at the front desk *were not terribly friendly*.

e.g., The bed was also *not terribly comfortable* - okay for a night or two but gets a little tough for more than that.

While it is possible to use terribly with neutral words, it is less common and often not necessary. Other adverbs, like very or quite, are more commonly used for neutral or moderate emphasis, leaving terribly to serve the purpose of intensifying either positivity or negativity in language. However, in my dataset, I faced some reviews using terribly in neutral sense such as follow:

e.g. The noises, however, didn't awaken my mother or the others in our party, so I cannot complain too terribly much.

e.g., This is a fabulous new place whose main disadvantage is that it's in a terribly suburban location that would suck the fun out of being a tourist in San Diego.

e.g. It wasn't a corner room and I was afraid it wasn't going to be terribly big, but it was surprisingly spacious.

e.g. My friends and I had an absolutely horrible experience and were treated terribly by the staff at the NOT so Jolly Madison Towers.

In this sentence the neighboring words did not have any negative or positive semantic prosody, but the adverb terribly here means badly. The maximizer terribly is playing a different role compared to the other 4 maximizers because it has a meaning of negativity in itself but the other maximizer is more intensifying the degree or extent of the adjectives or

adverbs they modify. In summary, *terribly* is more commonly used to express strong negative sentiments.

## 4.7 Comparison

To compare and sum up, *utterly* and *terribly* tend to combine with emotionally loaded adjectives, negative or positive, but are hardly ever combined with neutral adjectives. It can also be seen that the positive/negative distribution varies between maximizers. All adverbs have the same total count of 300 each, while *terribly* have 290 total occurrences and as it is clearly shown in the table, it has the highest number of negative sentiment occurrences.

Among the keywords, negative sentiment is the most common, followed by positive and then neutral. *Terribly* is the adverb with the highest number of negative occurrences (206), while *totally* has the highest number of positive occurrences (128). It is worth mentioning that *terribly* is special because it very often (more than 36%) is preceded by a negation, as in *not terribly over-priced*. This negation has an effect of anti-maximizing or mitigating.

Among maximizers, *totally* and *entirely* have a relatively balanced distribution of sentiments, with neutral being the smallest category. In addition, *utterly* and *completely* have a larger proportion of negative sentiments compared to positive and neutral.

## 4.8 Correlations

The correlation was computed between the semantic connotation of the collocate each keyword occurrence, which was manually annotated for each review, and the polarity of the review as a whole, as provided by the data sources. The correlation value was computed using `pandas.DataFrame.corr`<sup>1</sup> which uses the Pearson correlation coefficient as the default. The correlation values for all words are in Table 3:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://pandas.pydata.org/pandas-docs/stable/reference/api/pandas.DataFrame.corr.html>



Table 3: Correlation between semantic prosody and review polarity

<i>word</i>	<i>correlation</i>
utterly	0.72
totally	0.58
entirely	0.40
completely	0.55
terribly	0.15

It is not surprising that there is a positive correlation for every maximizer. This suggests that people writing a negative review, for instance, will tend to use the maximizer to emphasize the negativity of their message.

The study aimed to investigate the relationship between the semantic connotation of certain words (particularly maximizers such as *utterly*, *totally*, *entirely*, *completely*, and *terribly*) within individual reviews and the overall polarity of those reviews. Polarity here refers to whether a review expresses a positive, negative, or neutral sentiment. The analysis computed the correlation between the semantic connotation of these words and the overall polarity of the reviews.

The results displayed in *Table. 3* provide correlation values representing the strength and direction of the relationship between the usage of these maximizers and the sentiment expressed in the reviews:

*Utterly* shows a relatively high positive correlation of 0.72 with review polarity. It suggests that when reviewers use *utterly* within their reviews, there's a strong tendency for the review to exhibit a more extreme sentiment, whether positive or negative.

*Totally* Similar to *utterly* also demonstrates a notably positive correlation of 0.58. Its usage tends to coincide with a strong sentiment in the reviews, indicating a significant expression of positivity or negativity.

*Entirely* displays a moderate positive correlation of 0.40. Its presence in the reviews correlates moderately with the overall sentiment expressed but to a lesser extent compared to *utterly* and *totally*.

*Completely* has a positive correlation of 0.55, indicating a moderate relationship between its usage and the sentiment expressed in the reviews.

And finally, in contrast to the other words, *terribly* exhibits a lower positive correlation of 0.15. As it is clear, the correlation is rather low for *terribly*, which may be explained by the fact that this word occurs with negation about 1/3 of the time, thus inverting or at least attenuating the attitude. This lower correlation suggests that its presence in reviews might not strongly align with the overall sentiment expressed. My study suggests that this lower correlation could be due to the word *terribly* frequently occurring alongside negations (e.g., *not terribly*), which may either invert or dampen the conveyed attitude.

The positive correlations for the maximizers (except for *terribly*) suggest that reviewers, when using such words, tend to emphasize the sentiment, whether positive or negative, within their reviews. The differences in correlation values among these words indicate varying degrees of association between their usage and the expressed sentiment, with *terribly* exhibiting a notably lower correlation due to its frequent co-occurrence with negations. This suggests that the context in which these words are used could impact the overall sentiment of the review.

# CHAPTER 5

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### 5.1 Introduction

The discussion section of this thesis extensively examines the study of semantic prosody in the realm of hotel reviews, centering on intensifying adverbs like *utterly*, *completely*, *totally*, *entirely*, and *terribly*. This exploration involves analyzing the emotional and evaluative implications resulting from the pairings of these adverbs with related words or expressions sourced from datasets obtained from Booking.com and TripAdvisor. These datasets were rigorously marked to denote their positive, negative, or neutral implications, allowing for a numerical analysis that uncovered unique structures in semantic prosody linked to each intensifying adverb.

### 5.2 Restate the Findings

The analysis of hotel reviews from TripAdvisor and Booking.com indicates that the adverb *utterly* predominantly connects with negative sentiments. Among the 300 associated words, 175 were negative, signaling significant dissatisfaction or disappointment in the hotel experience. This reveals that *utterly* not only intensifies sentiments but strongly polarizes them, as it frequently emphasizes extreme dissatisfaction, prominently indicated by negative words like *disappointed* and *disgusting*. Conversely, positive associations with *utterly* were fewer but still present, with 115 instances of positive language depicting various favorable aspects of the hotel experience, including cleanliness, food quality, staff service, ambiance, and overall customer experience, reflecting a strongly positive context. A small number of neutral words appeared alongside *utterly* in the dataset, such as *unbelievable* and prepositional words, which did not strongly convey positive or negative sentiments but contributed to a more balanced perspective within the reviews.

Overall, the study concluded that *utterly* predominantly emphasizes extreme negativity in these hotel reviews, while also moderately highlighting extremely positive aspects. The

neutral collocates, though few, provided a more neutral or balanced viewpoint within the context of the reviews.

The study found that the maximizer *totally* is versatile, amplifying both positive and negative sentiments based on the specific context in which it is used. Maximizer *totally* has associations with both positive and negative sentiments. When paired with positive terms like *recommend* and *worth*, it intensifies positive sentiments, indicating strong approval and satisfaction. Conversely, out of the 300 instances of *totally*, 136 were linked with negative semantic prosody. They have a combination of negative words like *inadequate* and *unacceptable* accentuate negative sentiments, emphasizing extreme dissatisfaction or disappointment.

Additionally, the dataset contained words with a neutral connotation such as *different* and *unexpected*. *Different* was considered neutral as its interpretation depended on the context, while *unexpected* could denote either neutral or positive descriptions, depending on the specific circumstances within the reviews. Overall, *totally* emerges as a versatile modifier capable of intensifying both positive and negative sentiments within hotel reviews, emphasizing the extremeness of experiences encountered by guests during their stays.

The maximizer *entirely* compared to similar maximizers reveals an interesting observation. In contrast to its counterparts, *entirely* demonstrates a more even distribution in its associations with positive, negative, and neutral connotations. Unlike other such intensifiers, *entirely* appears to lean towards a neutral stance, lacking inherent positive or negative implications. Its primary role involves modifying the degree or extent of something, emphasizing completeness in experiences, regardless of their positive, negative, or neutral nature.

The balance observed in the semantic connotations of *entirely* may stem from its adaptability to various contexts and its focus on emphasizing completeness in experiences, regardless of their tone. The overall sentiment of a statement heavily relies on the specific context and the words *entirely* modify within that context.

Furthermore, it is important to note the prevalence of neutral words over positive ones that collocate with *entirely*. Among the frequently occurring keywords, *different* appeared 19 times, followed by *non-smoking* occurring 9 times after *entirely* in the reviews, as detailed in appendix 9.

Around half of the reviews that employed the maximizer *completely* displayed negative connotations. Specifically, terms such as *ruined*, *ignored*, *unacceptable*, *blocked*, and *overpriced* appeared most frequently, indicating undesirable or problematic features frequently mentioned in hotel reviews.

On the other hand, words like *safe*, *renovated*, *satisfied*, *enjoyed*, *comfortable*, and *impressed* were frequently paired positively with "completely." These terms inherently possess positive meanings and surfaced in positive reviews.

Similar to other maximizers, the term *different* was coupled with *completely* nine times and is generally viewed as a neutral word. *Different* is versatile in that it describes variance or distinctiveness without inherently attaching a value judgment. Its connotation is dependent on the context and specific circumstances.

The result of the adverb *terribly*, finding it mainly associated with conveying negative sentiments. Over 70% of its pairings expressed negativity, intensifying attributes like disappointment or discomfort. While linked with positive words to emphasize extreme positivity, there was negation in 84% of the cases, such as in *not terribly friendly*, so that the positivity of the collocate is strongly attenuated. Comparatively, *terribly* was rarely used with neutral words and played a distinct role by intensifying negativity compared to other maximizers, which primarily amplify the degree or extent of the words they modify. In essence, *terribly* was predominantly utilized to express strong negative sentiments in these reviews.

### 5.3 Relation to the Literature

In 1993, Louw was the first person who examined the adverb *utterly*. He categorized it as 'good' and 'bad' prosody. He studied the semantic prosody of Philip Larkin's poem "First Sight," a work previously analyzed by Sinclair in 1966. Louw found particular interest in the poem's concluding line. This fascination was demonstrated through the examination of a concordance for the word *utterly* extracted from the original 18 million-word Cobuild corpus. In total, there were 99 citations, with every third one being included for further analysis. As Louw (1993) examined the collocation words to the right of *utterly*, he discovered a phenomenon like what Sinclair had observed for *set in*. The concordance indicated that *utterly* carried a predominantly negative in 18-million-word corpus in Cobuild or as he wrote

*bad* (in Louw's terms) *prosody*, with only a limited number of positive 'good' words appearing as right-collocates. (W. E. Louw, 1993)

Compared to Louw study, later Partington (2004) focused in his study on subsets of maximizers specifically, *completely*, *entirely*, *totally*, and *utterly*. These four words share many similarities especially in terms of their frequent collocations, indicating a significant overlap in collocation among them. A more in-depth examination of the noteworthy words commonly associated with each of them proved to be particularly fascinating. When Partington (2004) delved into *utterly*, which could be seen as *purest specimen* within this group, he found that these often-modified words typically conveyed either a general notion of *lack of a certain quality* or some form of *change or transformation of state*. The collocates that fitted into the initial category encompassed words like *helpless*, *useless*, *unable*, and *forgotten*. In the second category, he found words such as *changed* and *different*. However, terms like *failed*, *ruined*, and *destroyed* appeared to belong to both categories. There were only two collocates that might be considered to carry a positive connotation, namely *pleasant* and *clear*. This data aligned with (W. E. Louw, 1993, pp. 160–161) finding that *utterly* typically conveyed unfavorable meanings. However, the presence of *utterly pleasant* underscored the idea that linguistic tendencies were not rigid and could be used by speakers to achieve specific communicative effects.

Ebeling (2014b) conducted a comparative analysis of semantic prosody, focusing on three English items with well-established negative semantic prosody: *commit*, *sign of*, and *utterly*. The Norwegian equivalents of these expressions were determined using a bilateral translation corpus, specifically, the English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus. The research revealed that while units containing *commit* and *signs of* had reliable correspondences in Norwegian in terms of semantic prosody, units featuring *utterly* were less consistent between the two languages. This underscores the significance of conducting such studies to enhance our comprehension of how extended units of meaning are expressed across different languages.

Despite the study relying on limited comparative data, it yielded valuable insights into how Norwegian translates English expressions with negative semantic connotations. Specifically, the Norwegian equivalents of these expressions, such as *completely* and *altogether*, exhibited variations. In the case of *utterly*, Norwegian was presented a split between *fullstendig* and *helt* (and to some extent, *aldeles*) as potential translations, which differed from *commit* and

*signs of*, where a single dominant Norwegian translation with similar negative connotations was observed.

The objective of his study was to assess whether any of the three primary translations of *utterly* in Norwegian aligned with its semantic context and conveyed a comparable prosody. *Fullstendig* and *aldeles* were categorized as amplifiers/maximizers as cited in (as cited in Ebeling, 2014b), while *helt* served various roles. The analysis demonstrated that *fullstendig* reasonably matched *utterly* in terms of both semantic context and prosody. However, *aldeles* and *helt* did not consistently capture the prosody of *utterly*, even though *aldeles* was often linked to negative states, as its usage varied and could also be found in positive contexts. Regarding the instability of how *utterly* and its Norwegian counterparts convey meaning across languages, it is important to highlight that a search in the 100 million-word monolingual BNC (British National Corpus) tends to present a less consistent pattern of the claimed negative connotations associated with *utterly*. However, it is still quite evident in the BNC that *utterly* is predominantly linked to negative contexts, although perhaps not to the same extent as observed with *commit* and *signs of*. This variability could contribute to the cross-linguistic finding that *utterly* lacks clearly defined prosodic equivalents in Norwegian, often resulting in instances where no direct match is found. This observation also suggested that since there is not a single, perfectly stable counterpart for *utterly* in Norwegian, translators might opt for the strategy of omitting it rather than attempting to find a remarkably close or precise equivalent.

Alrajhi (2019) conducted a study which delved into the examination of semantic prosody and semantic preference within the writings of Saudi EFL students, particularly in relation to the usage of four maximizers: *completely*, *entirely*, *totally*, and *utterly*. The findings were then compared with those from a study conducted by Partington (2004), where the same maximizers were analyzed using data from the Cobuild corpus.

The results regarding semantic prosody revealed a notable difference. In Partington's study, *utterly* had an unfavorable connotation, while the other three maximizers appeared to have a more balanced mix of favorable and unfavorable associations. Conversely, in the students' writings (Alrajhi, 2019), all four maximizers exhibited a positive prosody.

Regarding semantic preference, a significant portion of the items identified in the students' writings fell within a semantic category related to emotions and mental states, which diverged from the results in Partington's study. Another contrast emerged in the fact that all four

maximizers demonstrated a tendency to co-occur with words related to absence in the corpus, whereas the data from the students' writings indicated that students rarely used such absence-related words alongside these maximizers. Nevertheless, similarities in collocational patterns were observed, particularly in these maximizers with collocations associated with change, dependency, and independence.

My findings demonstrate a similar trend in associating these maximizers with the polarity of sentiments. The adverb *utterly* appeared to predominantly connect with negative sentiments, intensifying extreme dissatisfaction or disappointment in hotel experiences. Similarly, *totally* amplifies both positive and negative sentiments based on specific contexts, while *entirely* seems to show a more even distribution across positive, negative, and neutral connotations. My research also mentioned the adverb *terribly*, which mainly conveys negative sentiments, emphasizing disappointment or discomfort, albeit occasionally used with positive words that are significantly negated. In addition, these maximizers do not possess fixed connotations; rather, they derive their meaning based on the words they modify and the context in which they are used. This variability in meaning underscores the importance of considering the broader context when interpreting these maximizers. Therefore, a comparative approach strengthens the understanding of how these adverbs are used in different contexts and contributes to the broader understanding of their impact on sentiment.

Comparing these findings to related research studies, including (Alrajhi, 2019; Ebeling, 2014b; W. E. Louw, 1993; Partington, 2004) there are several points of convergence and divergence:

My study aligns with Louw(1993) and Partington (2004), which both indicate that *utterly* primarily conveys negative meanings in the context of various collocations. Louw's examination found that *utterly* predominantly carried a negative prosody, while Partington noted that the word often modified terms with unfavorable connotations.

The variability of how *utterly* conveys sentiment across languages was another significant topic by Ebeling (2014b) who addressed the issue of translating *utterly* into Norwegian, highlighting the complexity of finding exact equivalents due to variations in how the word conveys meaning and prosody across languages. The instability of equivalencies between languages could lead to translators omitting the term rather than finding precise equivalents. This observation also underscores the complexities faced by translators when conveying



nuanced sentiments from one language to another. It also suggests that certain linguistic nuances might not have direct matches in other languages, posing difficulties in translation and potentially leading to variations in interpreted meanings.

The research on students' writing differences across languages revealed noticeable disparities in how semantic prosody and linguistic expressions are shaped within varied cultural and educational contexts. Alrajhi (2019) compared the findings from the Cobuild corpus with those of Saudi EFL students' writings. Contrasting results emerged regarding semantic prosody, with the students' writings portraying a positive connotation for all four maximizers, including *utterly*, which differs from Partington's study. Moreover, the differing results suggest that language usage might evolve, vary among user groups, or be influenced by specific contexts, indicating the need for continuous exploration and analysis of language usage across different settings

The main consensus across these studies, including mine, is that these intensifier adverbs or maximizers tend to strongly intensify sentiments, polarizing the nature of expressions in different contexts. *Utterly* and *terribly* often associate more with negative sentiments, while *totally*, *entirely*, and *completely* display more versatility, modifying both positive and negative sentiments based on the context. However, the interpretation of these adverbs might vary across different languages and contexts, leading to differences in their perceived connotations. Additionally, my findings add depth to the discussion by analyzing their usage specifically in hotel reviews, showcasing how these intensifiers play a crucial role in expressing sentiments about experiences.

Comparing previous studies, my research specifically focused in a specific context which was hotel reviews, offering valuable insights into how these adverbs shape the expression of sentiments related to hospitality experiences. This specialized focus showcases the nuanced role of maximizers in shaping perceptions of customer experiences, thus being an important factor for businesses in understanding customer sentiment and feedback. I believe that this specialized examination provides valuable information for the hospitality industry to understand how customers express their experiences and sentiment in reviews, thus enabling them to enhance service quality. Additionally, my study involves corpus analysis, demonstrating how linguistic nuances affect the interpretation of these maximizers. It highlights the importance of considering the broader context and specific linguistic structures in understanding the impact of these adverbs on sentiment expression.

## 5.4 Significance of my Study

Overall, the findings suggest that while these adverbs often intensify sentiments, their specific impact can vary significantly based on the context, language, and corpus in which they are used. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of these maximizers necessitates a contextualized approach that considers various linguistic and situational factors.

My study's significance lies in providing a focused exploration of how specific adverbs impact sentiment expression in hotel reviews. While it specifically focuses on hotel reviews in a particular language, it hints at potential cross-linguistic implications. My findings could suggest the need for further research on how these maximizers are utilized in different languages and how their translation might vary, contributing to a better understanding of linguistic variations and the challenges faced by translators. The findings can also be practically applied by businesses in the hospitality sector to better understand and respond to customer feedback. Recognizing how these maximizers shape customer sentiment in reviews can assist hotels and accommodations in addressing specific areas of concern or improving on highlighted positive aspects of the guest experience. Overall, it contributes to the broader understanding of language usage, sentiment analysis, and offers practical implications for the service industry to enhance customer experiences based on the analysis of reviews.

My study on adverbs in hotel reviews, concerning semantic prosody, converges with a range of prior research, encompassing various scholars and diverse timeframes, elucidating the significance of linguistic nuances across different contexts.

Certainly, the significance of my study is underscored by its unique focus on exploring semantic prosody within the specific domain of hotel reviews. This contrasts with earlier research efforts that tended to concentrate on more general linguistic analyses or focused on diverse industries and language learning.

Additionally, by referencing (Ilkay EyiSüren et al., 2023) (2023a) study, my research aligns with efforts to glean insights from guest feedback, contributing to industry improvements and guest experience. The comparison with Zhang and Verma's (2017) analysis emphasizes the relevance of understanding adverbs' semantic prosody in reviews, impacting hotel management strategies and service improvements.

The contextual relevance of my study resonates with Ji and We's (2000) findings on dictionary representations and the potential for misleading non-native English speakers due to the absence of adequate semantic prosody representations in bilingual dictionaries. This aligns with the suggestions by Zhang (2009), emphasizing the importance of incorporating semantic prosody into language learning materials to prevent misleading information for learners.

My work complements the efforts of previous scholars, enhancing the understanding of semantic prosody's impact on language learners, cross-linguistic differences, and the importance of accurate representation in dictionaries. Additionally, my study's focus on the hospitality industry underscores its significance in understanding guest sentiments, service quality improvement, and overall industry-specific implications.

By integrating findings from various scholars and across different periods, my study provides a comprehensive understanding of semantic prosody, its implications for language learning, and its practical application in industries like hospitality, thereby adding valuable contributions to this field.

The contributions in the field of semantic prosody analysis are extensive and diverse. Several studies have delved into different languages, industries, and contexts, shedding light on the significance of understanding semantic prosody. Among these, Hosseini-Maasoum's (2013, 2014) research focused on Persian verbs' semantic prosody, indicating changes over time in terms of positive or negative associations. These studies demonstrated the dynamic nature of semantic prosody and its evolution in language use over historical periods.

Moreover, Lin and Chung's (n.d.) study about the verb *challenge* exemplifies how words may possess both positive and negative semantic prosody, based on their context and usage. This nuanced understanding aligns with the findings of my analysis of adverbs in hotel reviews, showing the contextual dependency of semantic prosody in language expressions.

Additionally, the investigation by Hauser and Schwarz (2016) offers an intriguing perspective on how semantic prosody can influence evaluative judgments. This indicates that the understanding of semantic prosody is not just confined to linguistic analysis but can have implications in broader cognitive and psychological domains, influencing perceptions and judgments.

My study's focal point on hotel reviews bridges the gap between linguistic analysis and practical applications in the service industry. The comparison between various adverbs and their semantic prosody in the context of hotel reviews sets a unique precedent, providing insights that could be instrumental for hotel management, stakeholders, and even linguistic analysts. It contributes to the understanding of how words' semantic prosody shapes the evaluation of guest experiences and perceptions, facilitating improvements in service quality and customer satisfaction.

In conclusion, my study plays a vital role in connecting the theoretical understanding of semantic prosody with practical, real-world applications in the domain of hospitality. By focusing on a specific industry and comparing adverbs within the context of hotel reviews, my research offers valuable insights into how language nuances impact customer perceptions and, consequently, service improvements within the hospitality sector. This particular focus is relatively novel in comparison to previous studies that either concentrated on different parts of speech or explored semantic prosody in more general or technical texts.

Comparing the findings from my study to previous research in the field of semantic prosody, several distinct points of differentiation or advancements can be observed:

Firstly, my study uniquely focuses on maximizers within hotel reviews, revealing how these linguistic elements shape the perception of guest experiences. This emphasis on a specific context, unlike previous studies exploring various genres or technical texts, provides targeted insights applicable to the hospitality industry. Secondly, my research's application in the service industry, especially in the hospitality sector, distinguishes it from previous studies that might have examined semantic prosody in more academic or technical domains. It directly relates language nuances to practical service improvements in an industry concerned with customer satisfaction and experience. Thirdly, my study stands out by examining multiple maximizers in hotel reviews and comparing their semantic prosody. This multi-adverb comparative analysis within a specific context is a novel approach, providing a comprehensive understanding of how different adverbs shape the perception of guest experiences. Lastly, by unveiling the emotional and evaluative aspects within hotel reviews, my research presents a practical implication for service enhancement in the hospitality industry. Understanding the semantic prosody of maximizers can empower hoteliers and stakeholders to make targeted improvements based on guests' emotional expectations and needs. Overall, my research not only delves into the linguistic aspects but also holds

substantial implications for practical applications, making it a valuable contribution to both the field of linguistics and the hospitality industry.

My findings from analyzing hotel reviews shed light on the semantic prosody of various maximizers, particularly *utterly*, *entirely*, *totally*, *completely*, and *terribly*:

### Q1.Semantic Prosody of Maximizers

Among the maximizers analyzed, *utterly* emerged as a marker predominantly connected with negative sentiments, serving as a potent intensifier to emphasize extreme dissatisfaction or disappointment in the hotel experience. In contrast, *entirely* displayed a more balanced distribution of associations with positive, negative, and neutral connotations, making it a versatile linguistic element in conveying guest feedback. *Totally* exhibited a high degree of versatility, as its semantic prosody depended on the specific context in which it was employed, enabling it to amplify both positive and negative sentiments. The maximizer *completely* was noteworthy for its mixed associations, with a notable presence in both negative and positive contexts. Adverb *terribly* was found to be closely linked to expressing negative sentiments within hotel reviews. This term predominantly served as an intensifier to denote extreme dissatisfaction, even when coupled with positive words. Notably, it was observed that *terribly* effectively incorporated negation to diminish the positivity of the collocates. This linguistic device primarily intensified negative sentiments and, intriguingly, was frequently utilized to convey amplified negativity in situations where it would conventionally be expected to pair with positive words. This analysis of maximizers provides valuable insights into how these linguistic elements contribute to the intricate landscape of sentiments expressed within hotel reviews, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the role of semantic prosody in this context.

### Q2.Correlation between Maximizers and Polarity of Reviews

There is a strong correlation between the polarity of the collocates (words associated with the maximizers) and the overall polarity of the reviews. Negative collocates often align with negative reviews, while positive collocates correlate with positive reviews.

The analysis of maximizers within hotel reviews showcases a clear correlation between the polarity of the collocates (words associated with the maximizers) and the overall polarity of the reviews. In the study, it was observed that negative collocates predominantly aligned with

negative reviews, amplifying extreme dissatisfaction or disappointment within the hotel experiences. On the other hand, positive collocates were found to correlate with positive reviews, depicting favorable aspects such as cleanliness, quality of service, ambiance, and overall positive customer experience. This correlation signifies that the specific adverbs, depending on their associated words within the reviews, contribute significantly to shaping the overall sentiment expressed in the reviews, thus linking the polarity of their collocates directly to the sentiment conveyed in the reviews.

### Q3. Impact of Negation on Maximizers, Specifically Terribly

My findings align with related research, particularly studies examining semantic prosody in linguistic contexts. The observations regarding utterly amplifying negativity and the varied nuances of entirely and other maximizers resonate with previous studies examining similar linguistic phenomena. In other words, negation plays a substantial role in impacting maximizers, notably *terribly*, as it reduces the positive emphasis of the associated words. *Terribly* was predominantly used to heighten negative feelings, even when combined with positive terms, by introducing negation to lessen the positivity.

When used with negation, *terribly* significantly attenuated the positivity associated with collocated positive words. For instance, phrases such as *not terribly friendly* conveyed a weakened positivity despite the presence of positive terms. This indicates that the use of *terribly* with negation serves to diminish or lessen the extreme positivity implied by the associated positive words. In essence, the negation significantly affected the maximizer *terribly*, tempering the strength of the positive sentiment conveyed by its collocates.

### Q4. Alignment with Related Research

The findings from the analysis of maximizers in hotel reviews show significant consistency with previous research in the domain of semantic prosody and language analysis. For instance, the prior study by Louw in 1993 highlighted that the adverb *utterly* typically conveyed unfavorable meanings, primarily through its collocates. Similarly, my study observed that *utterly* had a predominantly negative prosody, aligning with Louw's findings.

Additionally, the research conducted by Alrajhi (2019) also revealed a disparity between the prosody identified in learners' writings and the traditional prosody associated with maximizers. This disparity is akin to the divergence noted in my study where maximizers like

*utterly* and *totally* were found to have strong negative associations in hotel reviews, contrasting with the neutral or positive prosody identified by Alrajhi.

The consistency between previous research on the semantic prosody of certain maximizers and the findings derived from the hotel review analysis supports the understanding that specific intensifiers like *utterly* tend to emphasize extreme negativity within their linguistic context, a conclusion echoed by earlier studies.

## Q5. Perspectives for Applying Semantic Prosody in Hotel Review Interpretation

There are absolutely significant perspectives for applying semantic prosody in the interpretation of hotel reviews. Understanding the nuances of semantic prosody, particularly concerning maximizers such as *utterly*, *entirely*, *totally*, *completely*, and *terribly*, can offer profound insights into the emotional underpinnings and the overall sentiments expressed within these reviews.

For instance, the analysis revealed that the adverb *utterly* predominantly aligned with negative sentiments, intensifying extreme negativity when paired with words like *disappointed* or *disgusting*. In contrast, when coupled with positive terms like *cleanliness* or *staff service*, it intensified extreme positivity.

By comprehending the semantic prosody of these intensifiers, hoteliers and industry stakeholders gain a deeper understanding of the emotional content within guests' feedback. This insight can be pivotal in evaluating guest satisfaction, identifying areas for improvement, and tailoring services to meet the emotional expectations and needs of guests. It enables a more nuanced understanding of guests' experiences, going beyond the surface-level content of the reviews to gauge the underlying emotional tone, thereby facilitating more informed decision-making in service enhancement, marketing strategies, and operational improvements within the hospitality industry.

Understanding the semantic prosody of maximizers in hotel reviews offers significant potential for interpreting guest experiences. By discerning the emotional implications within the reviews, hoteliers can gain insights into guest satisfaction, enabling them to adapt their services, marketing strategies, and operational improvements to better address the emotional needs and expectations of guests.

My study on the semantic prosody of maximizers within hotel reviews not only contributes to understanding linguistic nuances but also offers practical applications in the service industry, particularly in improving the guest experience in hospitality.

## **5.5 Recommendation for Further Studies**

Future research in the domain of semantic prosody within hotel reviews holds promising directions for more comprehensive insights. To enhance our understanding of maximizers' implications in guest feedback, a multifaceted approach is recommended. Firstly, temporal semantic analysis can uncover how the semantic prosody of maximizers evolves over distinct time periods, shedding light on changing language trends within the hospitality industry. A cross-cultural examination, extending the analysis to diverse cultures and languages, will provide valuable insights into how linguistic nuances and cultural contexts influence the usage and interpretation of these linguistic elements across global demographics. Exploring the direct influence of semantic prosody on consumer decision-making in selecting accommodations will guide the hospitality industry in adapting marketing strategies and improving services to align with guest sentiment. Investigating the impact of reviewer demographics, including age, nationality, and travel purpose, as well as individual behavioral patterns, on maximizer usage will deepen our understanding of reviewers' language choices. Lastly, assessing how management responses or actions affect the sentiment and usage of maximizers in subsequent reviews will provide valuable insights into enhancing guest satisfaction and experiences. These recommendations collectively offer a comprehensive framework for future studies to further elucidate the semantic prosody of maximizers within the context of hotel reviews.



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## APPENDICES

The appendices provide frequency lists of automatically extracted collocating words immediately following a given maximizer, grouped by negative, positive or neutral value of the collocate.

### Appendix 1: Negative collocations with *utterly*

disappointed	9
disgusting	9
ridiculous	8
unacceptable	8
disgusted	7
useless	6
disinterested	4
uninterested	3
incompetent	3
rude	3
filthy	3
unprofessional	3
disappointed	2
shocked	2
embarrassed	2
awful	2
confused	2
horrible	2
disappointing	2
exhausted	2
annoying	2

miserable	2
dumbfounded	2
clueless	2
overwhelming	2
lacking	2
inept	2
failed	2
chaos	1
disturbed	1
insulting	1
opposed	1
generic	1
disorganized	1
pointless	1
stupefied	1
unbelievable	1
amateur	1
crazy	1
false	1
inconvenient	1
absent	1
uncomfortable	1
grossed	1
depressing	1
desolate	1
flabbergasted	1
embarrassing	1
unremarkable	1
characterless	1

deserted	1
ZERO	1
ripped	1
incongruous	1
destroyed	1
baffling	1
lackluster	1
bizarre	1
without	1
obnoxious	1
and	1
hopeless	1
ordinary	1
ambivalent	1
turned	1
unlucky	1
speechless	1
stupid	1
puzzling	1
ignored	1
lost	1
played	1
extortionate	1
dreadful	1
stopped	1
mad	1
GOUGE	1
lacked	1
ineffectual	1

rammed	1
despicable	1
appalling	1
hideous	1
overwhelmed	1
gross	1
furious	1
demotivated	1
spoiled	1
lackadaisical	1
sad	1
confusing	1
unconcerned	1
wasted	1
freezing	1
pathetic	1
dependent	1
overbearing	1
tasteless	1
unclean	1
shocking	1
pretentious	1
unattentive	1
unhelpful	1
dirty	1
neglected	1



## Appendix 2: Positive collocations with *utterly*

charming	11
professional	7
amazing	5
comfortable	5
delicious	5
quiet	3
clean	3
perfect	3
fantastic	3
immaculate	3
lovely	3
impressed	3
charmed	2
gorgeous	2
cool	2
outstanding	2
spectacular	2
modern	2
delightful	2
spotless	2
beautiful	2
helpful	2
wonderful	1
courteous	1
enormous	1
one-of-a-kind	1
normal	1

kind	1
delighted	1
to	1
refreshing	1
in	1
unique	1
genuine	1
amazed	1
memorable	1
serviceable	1
friendly	1
welcomed	1
welcome	1
flawless	1
extraordinary	1
superb	1
warm	1
made	1
pleased	1
cared	1
stunning	1
luxurious	1
elegant	1
peaceful	1
unpretentious	1
pampered	1
astonishing	1
great	1
practical	1

awed	1
pleasurable	1
and	1
cheap	1
respectful	1
fine	1

### Appendix 3: Neutral collocations with *utterly*

unbelievable	1
to	1
suggest	1
silent	1
confirmed	1
without	1
astonishing	1
amazed	1
stunning	1
amazing	1

#### **Appendix 4: Negative collocations with *totally***

inadequate	6
unacceptable	6
ignored	5
ruined	3
messed	3
unhelpful	3
out	3
impossible	3
disappointed	3
regretted	2
unfriendly	2
appalled	2
useless	2
overpriced	2
not	2
wrong	2
disappointing	2
ripped	2
incompetent	2
forgotten	2
ineffective	2
unsafe	1
dropped	1
clueless	1
freaked	1
unapologetic	1
masked	1

boring	1
inappropriate	1
misrepresented	1
sub	1
unsuitable	1
unfair	1
stripped	1
period-unrealistic	1
outrageous	1
blinding	1
untrue	1
uninterested	1
inexcusable	1
rubbish	1
vanilla	1
unconcerned	1
backwards	1
destroyed	1
disgusted	1
turned	1
understaffed	1
disgusting	1
make	1
stopped	1
missed	1
bare	1
ignoring	1
depressing	1
let	1

ignore	1
exhausted	1
and	1
on	1
overwhelmed	1
needed	1
overworked	1
blackball	1
obscene	1
forgot	1
unfounded	1
isolated	1
inedible	1
insulated	1
unjustifiable	1
packed	1
unnecessary	1
unreasonable	1
exhausted	1
unmanageable	1
unwarranted	1
watery	1
stuck	1
finished	1
nothing	1
what	1
unpleasant	1
the	1
false	1

impractical	1
put	1
bad	1
uncalled	1
does	1
outdated	1
blocked	1
underwhelmed	1
misses	1
insulate	1
odd	1
screwed	1
neglected	1



## Appendix 5: Positive collocations with *totally*

recommend	11
worth	10
safe	7
satisfied	4
welcome	3
renovated	3
fine	3
updated	3
refurbished	3
modern	2
comfortable	2
enjoyed	2
stay	2
accurate	2
different	2
happy	2
new	2
professional	2
love	2
impressed	2
true	1
satisfactory	1
choose	1
ECO-friendly	1
took	1
delicious	1
accommodating	1

appreciate	1
met	1
over	1
astonished	1
at	1
overrated	1
walkable	1
predictable	1
convenient	1
amazing	1
cool	1
resting	1
understand	1
fresh	1
understood	1
loved	1
focused	1
renervated	1
problem	1
the	1
self-reliant	1
helped	1
makes	1
suitalbe	1
engaging	1
smoke	1
enjoyable	1
lived	1
complete	1

pleasant	1
ZEN	1
eliminated	1
free	1
original	1
pampered	1
full	1
friendly	1
remodeled	1
in	1
make	1
understanding	1
awed	1
clean	1
adequate	1
credits	1
dug	1
understands	1
recommended	1
prepared	1
all	1
customer	1
cleaned	1

## Appendix 6: Neutral collocations with *totally*

different	6
unexpected	3
booked	3
a	2
non-smoking	1
not	1
separate	1
Arabic	1
opposite	1
at	1
give	1
difference	1
covered	1
made	1
stay	1
cancelled	1
flabagastered	1
want	1
last	1
necessary	1
off	1
out	1
subjective	1
amazed	1
full	1
did	1

## Appendix 7: Negative collocations with *entirely*

too	17
and	5
unacceptable	3
rude	2
of	2
the	2
empty	2
awful	2
blocked	2
unhelpful	2
my	2
wrong	2
disappointing	2
our	2
to	2
T00	1
unreliable	1
emptied	1
spacious	1
obstructed	1
The	1
unjustified	1
par	1
unusable	1
uninterested	1
impossible	1
disappointed	1

inconsistent	1
on	1
ineffective	1
shut	1
clogged	1
crazy	1
closed	1
limited	1
so	1
understaffed	1
from	1
missing	1
incompetent	1
small	1
eradicate	1
outdated	1
unfriendly	1
ruined	1
unenthused	1
filthy	1
forgettable	1
blocks	1
self	1
unexpected	1
with	1
missed	1
occupied	1
unfamiliar	1
off	1

unfit	1
sure	1
fed	1
sub	1
absent	1
un-inviting	1
bothersome	1
enclosed	1
inadequate	1
ordinary	1
different	1
sold	1
empty-	1
unreasonable	1
underwhelmed	1
a	1
unprovoked	1

## Appendix 8: Positive collocations with entirely

clean	8
sure	5
comfortable	4
safe	4
adequate	4
helpful	3
acceptable	3
satisfactory	3
pleasant	3
pleased	2
too	2
welcoming	2
friendly	2
clear	2
enjoyed	1
bad	1
worth	1
remodeled	1
what	1
impressed	1
charming	1
accurate	1
though	1
polite	1
based	1
surprising	1
cleaned	1



the	1
new	1
serviced	1
discount	1
relax	1
competent	1
T00	1
counterintuitive	1
walkable	1
modernized	1
huge	1
functional	1
free	1
successful	1
renovated	1
close	1
serviceable	1
convinced	1
complete	1
appealing	1
reasonable	1
newly	1
enthusiastic	1
knowledgeable	1
on	1
expected	1
excited	1
great	1
professional	1

happy	1
cordial	1
thrilled	1

## Appendix 9: Neutral collocations with *entirely*

different	19
on	8
non-smoking	7
booked	4
for	3
unexpected	3
up	3
to	3
nonsmoking	2
a	2
from	2
of	2
separate	2
in	2
smoke-free	2
covered	2
the	2
but	1
commercial	1
answered	1
connected	1
cooked	1
by	1
fixed	1
with	1
so	1
out	1

throughout	1
defeats	1
vegetarian	1
as	1
wi-fi	1
discrete	1
each	1
wheelchair	1
based	1
sure	1
made	1
reliant	1
bohemian	1
Breakfast	1
windows	1
during	1
web	1
depends	1
was	1

## Appendix 10: Negative collocations with *completely*

ruined	5
off	5
ignored	5
unacceptable	4
out	4
blocked	3
overpriced	3
disappointed	3
disappointing	2
disgusting	2
misrepresented	2
clueless	2
frustrated	2
outdated	2
useless	2
exhausted	2
floored	2
inappropriate	2
dissatisfied	2
messed	2
from	1
unattended	1
tacky	1
unpalatable	1
wrinkled	1
discriminated	1
unconcerned	1

untucked	1
grossed	1
closed	1
disgusted	1
beat	1
underwelmed	1
deteriorated	1
done	1
screwed	1
unsympathetic	1
chaotic	1
fall	1
inexistant	1
unreasonable	1
incompetent	1
flea	1
sub-par	1
opposite	1
non-childproof	1
horrible	1
inaccessible	1
unprofessional	1
fake	1
redone	1
antiquated	1
stained	1
wet	1
unfamiliar	1
make	1

forgotten	1
uncomfortable	1
ruining	1
burnt	1
hassled	1
in	1
alone	1
which	1
to	1
subpar	1
ignore	1
unrelated	1
lost	1
unsatisfactory	1
broken	1
wrong	1
disregarded	1
enclosed	1
dumbfounded	1
overrun	1
attached	1
turned	1
I	1
paranoid	1
invisible	1
lacking	1
dark	1
soaked	1
incongruous	1

negated	1
cracked	1
closing	1
stressed	1
blocking	1
Carpet	1
when	1
frayed	1
so	1
unhelpful	1
while	1
empty	1
and	1
missing	1
ineffectual	1
decieving	1
overshadowed	1
torn	1
misplaced	1
full	1
packed	1
let	1
occupied	1
ineffective	1
but	1
overcooked	1
if	1



## Appendix 11: Positive collocations with *completely*

safe	6
renovated	4
satisfied	4
enjoyed	3
exceeded	3
comfortable	3
impressed	3
new	2
redone	2
updated	2
pampered	2
remodeled	2
worth	2
quiet	2
cleaned	2
at	2
blown	2
good	1
justified	1
able	1
open	1
unreal	1
recommend	1
close	1
fell	1
and	1
reliable	1

absorbed	1
quietens	1
satisfactory	1
aware	1
as	1
enjoy	1
soundproof	1
They	1
sure	1
fresh	1
cleared	1
remodel	1
true	1
prepared	1
clean	1
fine	1
luxurious	1
equipped	1
surprised	1
relaxing	1
amazed	1
happy	1
spot	1
usable	1
understood	1
charming	1
tech	1
uninterrupted	1
harmless	1

full	1
embodied	1
lit	1
finished	1
helpful	1
renovate	1
served	1
in	1
welcome	1
functional	1
re-built	1
handicap-accessible	1
oblivious	1

## Appendix 12: Neutral collocations with *completely*

different	9
full	4
sold	3
booked	3
and	3
separate	3
changed	2
non-smoking	2
because	1
re-do	1
except	1
-	1
replaced	1
so	1
change	1
white	1
a	1
ready	1
surrounded	1
out	1
the	1
filled	1
latched	1
opposite	1
bypass	1
normal	1
by	1

made	1
glass	1
close	1
indoors	1

### Appendix 13: Negative collocations with *terribly*

disappointed	15
small	13
uncomfortable	12
noisy	11
slow	9
expensive	8
overpriced	8
wrong	7
stained	5
far	5
loud	4
old	4
outdated	4
and	4
busy	4
hot	3
picky	3
of	3
thin	3
low	2
disturbed	2
high	2
chipped	2
dirty	2
hard	2
sick	2
rude	2

cold	2
disappointing	2
soiled	2
long	2
regettful	1
on	1
scratched	1
poor	1
incorrect	1
dark	1
Very	1
understaffed	1
innappropriate	1
un-	1
late	1
dated-something	1
musty	1
windy	1
during	1
unreliable	1
cheap	1
bothersome	1
overheated	1
shocked	1
short	1
definately	1
or	1
inconvenienced	1
worn	1

uncomfortable	1
crabby	1
destructive	1
dated	1
-	1
dangerous	1
disorganized	1
unexciting	1
ugly	1
crowded	1
inconvenient	1
suburban	1
expensive-	1
mistaken	1
so	1
tiny	1
impractical	1
smelly	1
bad	1
needy	1
lumpy	1
much	1
steamy	1
clostrofobic	1
overrated	1
costly	1
off-putting	1
drunk	1
spacious	1



concerned	1
negative	1
over-priced	1

## Appendix 14: Positive collocations with *terribly*

friendly	7
comfortable	7
clean	4
efficient	3
helpful	3
good	2
spacious	2
fancy	2
exciting	2
designed	2
well	2
bright	2
important	2
knowledgeable	2
large	2
expensive	1
nice	1
powerful	1
noticeable	1
big	1
polite	1
close	1
successful	1
kid	1
so	1
new	1
soft	1

lit	1
inviting	1
impressive	1
clear	1
appealing	1
motivated	1
near	1
appetizing	1
organic	1
interesting	1
glamorous	1
scenic	1
pricey	1
useful	1
pleasant	1
high-end	1
convenient	1
substantial	1
fast	1
charming	1
speedy	1
trendy	1
special	1
responsive	1

## Appendix 15: Neutral collocations with *terribly*

of	1
much	1
big	1
concerned	1
by	1
suburban	1