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## **Critical Discourse Studies and Migration**

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### **Abstract**

Critical Discourse Studies, or CDS, is a multidisciplinary field of research which is broadly concerned with analysing how language and discourse are used to enact, maintain and challenge power relationships within society. CDS comprises a number of approaches to studying situated language use. In this chapter, we explore how such approaches can (and have) been used to help us understand and critically engage with the various ways in which migrants are talked about and represented – and in turn, understood – within societies. Following this survey, we demonstrate what a critical examination of representational discourses around migrants might look like by presenting an analysis of the discourses that characterise UK media representations of migrants who cannot speak English. The chapter then concludes by addressing some of the ethical considerations that arise when carrying out CDS research, both in relation to migration and in more general terms.

**Keywords:** Discourse; Language; Representation; Power; Ideology; Critical Discourse Analysis

### **1. Introduction**

This chapter introduces a broad, multidisciplinary field of study of language and text known as Critical Discourse Studies (CDS). Research within CDS comprises a range of complementary theoretical and methodological frameworks for systematically analysing how speakers'/writers' language and grammatical choices serve their particular communicative or ideological aims. Like Discourse Analysis (see: Gee 2014), CDS is committed to analysing naturally occurring language in-use, and provides methodological toolkits which enable a more systematic linguistic focus for text analysis than is possible through approaches such as content analysis. The key difference between CDS and Discourse Analysis is that the former is critical; CDS practitioners are committed to examining how issues such as power and social (in)equality are enacted, reproduced, and challenged through discourse. Issues such as ideology, power and social inequality are thus central concerns in CDS, and are understood through engagement with social theory, in particular Marxist and post-structuralist thinkers. In this sense, CDS is characteristically both multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary. That is to say, although its roots are in linguistics, the scope of CDS spans and often brings together

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insights from disciplines across the humanities and social sciences. In this chapter, we provide a detailed introduction to CDS, including its main principles and concerns and outline the main approaches falling under the CDS umbrella. We then describe how approaches to CDS have been used to study language, text and discourse relating to migration. Finally, we conclude by describing several ethical considerations underpinning CDS which are of particular relevance, we feel, to CDS research into migration and emphasise the need for CDS to go ‘beyond the text’ to address social issues and injustices.

## **2. CDS: Main principles and concerns**

CDS has its roots in ‘Critical Linguistics’, defined by (Fowler (1991) as a ‘method of applied language analysis’ (66) which enquires into ‘the relations between signs, meanings and the social and historical conditions which govern the semiotic structure of discourse, using a particular kind of linguistic analysis’ (5). It is fair to say that ‘discourse’ is a fairly nebulous term, as it is used to denote a wide range of phenomena across the humanities and social sciences, and can even be used inconsistently within a single field and paradigm (indeed, CDS is no exception to this). Mills (1997) provides an accessible and fairly comprehensive overview of the concept of discourse, with particular focus on the work of Foucault, whose writing has been influential to CDS. In relation to migration discourse, van Dijk (2018) argues,

The complexity of discourse as a linguistic, social, political and cultural object or phenomenon also characterises migration discourse, which represents a vast class of different discourse genres. The class of these genres is primarily defined in terms of their reference, that is, what they are about: the many aspects of migration as a social and political phenomenon. Other general classes of genres of discourse are, for instance, political discourse, media discourse or educational discourse. News reports, editorials, parliamentary debates, laws, or everyday conversations are among the many discourse genres that may be about migration in general, and related phenomena, such as migrants (Them), autochthonous peoples (Us), causes of migration, integration, xenophobia, discrimination, racism, immigration policies, and so on, in particular.

(van Dijk 2018: 230)

Research in CDS, and Critical Linguistics before it, has advanced a view of discourse as a form of social practice, being deeply entwined with the ways in which people act in, maintain, and regulate societies, as well as constituting an instrument through which individuals and institutions seek to promote and ‘naturalise’ particular values, practices and identities. It is with this view of discourse as a form of social practice in mind that van Dijk, elaborating on his definition of migration discourses presented above, also argues,

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Migration discourse not only may be about migration or its many aspects, but also be a constituent part of migration as a phenomenon, as would be the stories of migrants, as well as parliamentary discourse preparing immigration policies. Contemporary discourse studies emphasise this fact, namely that discourse is not just a form of language use, but also a form of social and political (inter)action. Thus, migration as a social phenomenon not only consists of (groups of) participants, institutions, many types of social and political (inter)action, but also, quite prominently, of many genres of migration discourse as social and political acts and interaction.

(van Dijk 2018: 230)

The connection between discourse and social practice is an important one to recognise, since it has endured through subsequent developments of Critical Linguistics, most notably by researchers working within the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) paradigm. Before describing the aims and developments of CDA/CDS, it is worth pausing to make a terminological clarification. At this time, the preferred label for this body of approaches and research was Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), though the preference for CDS seems to be growing. The (ongoing) transition from CDA to CDS reflects the fact that studies falling under this rubric are not necessarily based on applied analysis but can also make theoretical contributions. Like Critical Linguistics, CDS takes the view of language as a form of social practice that has ideological effects. Much early work in CDS also used Halliday's (1994 [1985]) Systemic Functional Linguistics as the basis of its linguistic analysis. However, as noted, CDS not only adopted but also developed principles from Critical Linguistics. Much of this development was in response to the criticism of Critical Linguistics that the precise nature of the relationship between language, power and ideology was theoretically underdeveloped. Researchers in CDS, at first in particular Norman Fairclough, Teun van Dijk and Ruth Wodak, thus set out to develop methodological and theoretical frameworks for studying in detail the relationships between language, power and ideology, which in turn were related to text creators' political and ideological interests.

In relating language to power and other social structures, CDS is particularly concerned with studying context, wherein discourse is viewed as both shaping and being shaped by the social, political and material conditions in which it takes place. Within CDS, language is therefore broadly viewed as both shaping and being shaped by society. From this perspective, power can be viewed as a product of discourse, where the task of CDS is accordingly to examine how power relations are 'exercised and negotiated in discourse' (Fairclough and Wodak 1997: 272). This view of discourse, as constitutive of society (and power relations within it), is an important component of the criticality of CDS (and of Critical Linguistics before it), which, as we have noted, involves going beyond describing linguistic features to interpreting, explaining and critiquing the ideological goals they perform beyond the text and within society more broadly. An important point to note about CDS is that its practitioners typically have an explicit emancipatory agenda (Fairclough and Wodak 1997). In other words, practitioners of CDS are openly committed to not only identifying but also

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challenging forms of social inequality, such as race-, gender- and class-based discrimination (among others).

To summarise the discussion to this point, we offer Fairclough's description of CDS as a field of study which 'combines critique of discourse and explanation of how it figures within and contributes to the existing social reality, as a basis for action to change that existing reality in particular respects' (2015 [1989]: 6). This summary is useful because it effectively captures CDS's critical (i.e., 'critique'), explanatory ('explanation') and emancipatory ('action') goals. In the next section, we will introduce the most established approaches within CDS, exemplifying through reference to key studies.

### **3. Approaches to CDS**

As we have stressed throughout the chapter to this point, there is no single, homogeneous approach to CDS. Rather, the field comprises a range of complementary approaches which, while broadly unified by the key principles discussed in the previous section, can nevertheless be distinguished from each other in terms of their methodological toolkits and precise analytical foci. In this section, we introduce some of the most established approaches within CDS.

#### *Dialectal-Relational Approach*

The Dialectal-Relational Approach (DRA) was developed by Norman Fairclough (2015 [1989]) and involves analysing what is considered to be the dialectal relationship between forms of semiosis (including language) and social practices, whereby social practices both constitute and are constituted by particular ways of communicating. DRA draws upon SFL as its analytical base (Halliday 1994 [1985]), wherein lexical and grammatical choices are interpreted in terms of the social functions they perform. Yet the focus of this approach is not just text producers' immediate objectives, but also the broader ideological structures through which powerful groups within society control the semiotic aspects of social practice, and thus social practices themselves. Fairclough (2015: 51) refers to this semiotic aspect of social practice as the 'order of discourse'. DRA's emancipatory aim is particularly concerned with raising consciousness and critical awareness of how the order of discourse contributes to the domination of some people within society by others.

Research which utilises DRA to examine issues surrounding migration has tended to focus on media texts, particularly print media, and the ways in which migrants are represented by these. In such cases, the DRA framework has allowed researchers to interpret the discriminatory and racist representations in terms of how these support the ideologies and

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interests of the media text producers, but also how these may then reflect back but also influence the attitudes of readers towards the particular minority groups concerned. For example, Harvey (2003) demonstrated how the use of humour and metaphorical language in British tabloid reporting around the Euro '96 football tournament offered a xenophobic representation of other nations whose teams were competing in the tournament (particularly Germany). Harvey attributed such representations to the nationalistic, anti-immigration ideologies that the tabloids in his data sought to circulate, and considered their potential social harm by situating his data within a UK political context in which right-wing, anti-immigration parties were gaining support. Similarly, Richardson (2007: 66) demonstrates how an article from the UK right-leaning tabloid, *The Sun*, used hyperbolic language to villainise and foreground the threat posed by a migrant who was involved in a road traffic accident. Richardson interpreted the way in which this story was reported by *The Sun* as the newspaper using it as an opportunity to push its anti-immigration agenda.

### *Socio-cognitive Approach*

The socio-cognitive approach (SCA), initially developed by Teun van Dijk (1991), is situated along CDS's socio-psychological dimension. The approach 'relates discourse structures to social structures via a complex socio-cognitive interface. As in Cognitive Linguistics, it critically describes the cognitive aspects of the use of some concepts or metaphors...' (van Dijk 2017: 54). More broadly, it 'deals with the ongoing communicative Common Ground and the shared social knowledge, as well as the attitudes and ideologies, of language users as current participants of the communicative situation and as members of social groups and communities' (ibid.). SCA views all forms of discourse (e.g. speech, writing, gestures, images, etc.) as a communicative event and draws on socio-cognitive theory and social representation theory (Moscovici 1984). Social representations conventionalize the objects, persons, and events that we encounter. When we encounter new objects, persons and events, even these are categorised into some representation. Thus, our experiences are interpreted as being part of a reality which is predetermined by conventions based on individual and collective experience. Social representations are dynamic and subject to change, though they are also always bound to particular social groups. Within the SCA, then, discourse is viewed as reflecting not just individual experiences and strategies but also collective frames of perceptions (i.e., social representations). In this sense, discourse forms a link between the social system and the individual cognitive system. When participating in a communicative event, individuals draw on 'context models' (i.e., mental representations of the structure of the communicative situation) and these influence the pragmatic aspects of the discourse, while 'event models' control its semantic aspects (van Dijk 2008). SCA focuses on three forms of social representations in this context: i.) knowledge (personal, group, cultural), ii.) attitudes, and iii.) ideologies. Of all the approaches to CDS, the notion of context is arguably most developed within SCA, which holds that discourses should be understood as being situated within society and as shaped by the interplay between situations, actions, actors and societal structures.

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In addressing the topic of racism and how immigrants and ethnic minorities are represented, van Dijk (1991) has demonstrated how analysis based on SCA can illuminate discriminatory ideologies surrounding migrants and migration within a society, and how these ideologies may come to inform how migrants are then not only spoken about but also perceived by its members. While the majority of van Dijk's research focused on media representations, more recently SCA has been applied in the study of other discursive contexts too. For example, Torkington (2014) used SCA to examine how lifestyle migrants are constructed within the linguistic landscape of a lifestyle migration destination in Portugal. In this study, collective identities and the identities of the places themselves are understood as being 'shared socio-cognitive representations which are established and negotiated via discursive practices' (2014: 77). Focusing on the context of real estate advertisements, this analysis shows how linguistic choices help to construct the sense in which prospective residents, by purchasing property and moving to the area, will enter a privileged, elite and exclusive group within society.

### *Discourse-Historical Approach*

The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) is an approach to CDS most associated with the work of Martin Reisigl and Ruth Wodak (2001). The approach understands and studies context mainly as historical. Analysing the historical contexts in which discourses are situated is thus a core aspect of DHA, as it 'allows transcending static spotlights and focusing on the diachronic reconstruction and explanation of discursive change' (Reisigl and Wodak 2015: 120). Although DHA engages with critical theory, unlike some other approaches within CDS it is not committed to a particular theory of language or framework for linguistic analysis. Rather, DHA advocates a flexible approach wherein conceptual and methodological tools are selected on the basis that they are adequate for the particular research question at hand. In their research on the rhetoric of racism and antisemitism, Reisigl and Wodak (2001) draw on argumentation theory and interpret language use as constituting topoi. Topoi can be defined as 'parts of argumentation that belong to obligatory, either explicit or inferable, premises. They are the content-related warrants or 'conclusion rules' that connect the argument with the conclusion of a claim' (Blackledge 2005: 67). While this theory is not, as noted, a fixture of DHA, others applying the approach have nevertheless drawn on it in their own Discourse-Historical analyses. Furthermore, while DHA is a flexible approach in terms of the types of discourse to which it can be applied, it has proved particularly popular in the study of language in political contexts.

Of all the approaches within CDS, DHA has arguably had the most influence on studies of migration. To give just a couple of examples, Demata (2017) examined U.S. President Donald Trump's use of aggressive language around immigration in a range of contexts (public speeches, interviews, and statements from his official website), and argued the resultant representations of immigration to 'display all the typical features of a populist

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agenda' (2017: 274). The use of multiple datasets in Demata's study is characteristic of DHA, which is committed to data and methodological triangulation (Reisigl and Wodak 2015). This is also reflected in a large study by Bennett (2018) who used DHA to examine the construction of migration in UK public discourse. Bennett's analysis involved a number of datasets representing different contexts of public discourse – namely, policy documents, media texts and focus groups with migrants and new citizens. By approaching the discourses he observed as historically situated, Bennett was able to observe a trend whereby the responsibility for migrant integration was increasingly placed with migrants themselves, as opposed to the more powerful groups and existing communities within the UK.

### *Social Actor Analysis*

Developed by Theo van Leeuwen and his colleagues (2008; see also: van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999), the object of Social Actor Analysis is typically the representations of social actors (including groups) and the actions that are attributed to them. Social actors tend to be studied in terms of the effects of the labels that are used to refer to them (e.g., individualisation, collectivisation, functionalisation), while actions tend to be examined in terms of the degree of agency that is attributed to them, whether they are evaluated favourably or unfavourably, which aspects tend to be foregrounded or backgrounded, and whether or not those actions are considered to be legitimate. Social Actor Analysis is a theoretically heterogeneous approach which draws on a range of linguistic and sociological theories to understand how the discourses used to represent actors and actions continually produce and reproduce social structures. In this sense, this approach in particular foregrounds the view of discourse as recontextualised social practice.

Social Actor Analysis has often been combined with other forms of CDS when applied to the study of migration. This includes the study in which the theory of discourse as recontextualised social practice was first advanced (van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999), in which the authors combined DHA with analysis of social actors and processes in Austrian immigration rejection letters. Their analysis demonstrated how the linguistic choices made in the representation of the social actors and processes involved served to legitimise the country's policies of immigration control. A similar methodological fusion can be observed in Zappettini's (2019) study of the debate on the UK's membership of the European Union in the context of Brexit. Zappettini's analysis demonstrated that representations of Britain in/and Europe could be used to (de)legitimate Brexit on either side of the debate, including legitimating the 'a new toxic (inter)national logic of Brexit: by leaving the EU, Britain "takes back control" to pursue mercantile policies whose benefits "outsiders" should be excluded from.

### *Multi-modal Critical Discourse Studies*

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Multi-modal Critical Discourse Studies (MCDS) is an emerging approach to the critical study of discourse which departs from the mainly linguistic focus of other approaches to CDS by embracing a characteristically multi-modal view of discourse (see Machin 2013). MCDS scrutinises text creators' design choices with respect not only to language but also visuals, sounds, materials and other semiotic modes. MCDS thus views discourses as multimodal and as the product of the combination of the various modes that are deployed within a text's design. Like other approaches to CDS, MCDS has a critical concern for the role that such multimodal discourses play in representing and constituting power relations and ideologies. Thus, Ledin and Machin (2017: 95) argue that MCDS needs to depart from a fundamentally social question: 'What semiotic resources are drawn upon in communication, or discourse, in order to carry out ideological work?'. Still in its relative infancy, MCDS can be viewed as part of the more general multi-modal turn that has taken place within linguistics and Discourse Analysis in recent decades. Most of the current work in this area has been influenced by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen's (2020 [1996]) *Reading Images*, which built on Halliday's SFL (1994 [1985]) to make the case for studying visual text design as the result of a series of choices, akin to a 'visual grammar'.

Perhaps due to its relative infancy, MCDS is more fragmented than other approaches to CDS, and as such an established approach to the multimodal critical study of migration discourse has yet to emerge. The value of studying migration discourses in modes beyond language is well demonstrated by Richardson and Colombo's (2013) study of anti-immigration discourse in the visual propaganda of the Italian radical right populist party, *Lega Nord* (since rebranded, *Lega*). While orienting to DHA, the authors also examined visual elements in the party's campaign posters and leaflets, focusing on how these had changed over time. Their analysis showed, among other things, how migrants were visually depicted in dehumanising terms. For example, in one campaign poster they analysed, migrants were pictured on a crowded boat, in long shot and from above (forcing viewers to both look on from a distance and to both literally and symbolically 'look down' on the pictured migrants). Moreover, this image bore the caption, 'L'orda no!' ('Not the horde!'). Beyond the visual, multimodal critical studies of discourse have also examined the potential for other modes of communication to contribute to discourses and ideologies around nation and which could thus be considered relevant to the study of migration and attitudes to migrants. For example, Machin and Richardson (2012) analysed how semiotic choices made in the melody, arrangements, sound qualities, rhythms and lyrics of two pieces of music written, shared and exalted by two pre-1945 European fascist movements (the German NSDAP and the British Union of Fascists) are used to convey certain ideas, values and attitudes based on 'mythologies of unity, common identity and purpose' (2012: 329).

### *Cognitive Linguistic Critical Discourse Studies*

Another relatively recent approach to CDS capable of incorporating the analysis of modes beyond just language is the Cognitive Linguistic approach. Hart (2017: 117) characterises the

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Cognitive Linguistic CDS as focusing on the interpretation stage of analysis; that is, it ‘addresses the cognitive-semiotic processes involved in understanding discourse and the fundamental role that these processes play in the construction of knowledge and the legitimation of action’. Cognitive Linguistic CDS therefore often involves detailed semantic analysis of language use, with particular emphasis on the ‘conceptual nature of meaning construction’, and concern with ‘modelling the conceptual structures and processes which, invoked by text in the course of discourse, constitute an ideologised understanding of the situations and events being described’ (ibid.). Cognitive Linguistics is not a particular theory but, rather, makes available to CDS practitioners a range of related theories and tools for analysing the relationship between discourse, cognition and ideology. Cognitive Linguistic approaches to CDS share with Cognitive Linguistics a number of assumptions about the nature of language (discussed in detail in Hart 2011, 2017). While CDS can thus make use of any of a number of approaches to Cognitive Linguistics, Hart (2017) identifies three programmes as being the most developed and widely applied in this area: image schema analysis, metaphor analysis, and discourse world analysis.

Hart (2011) demonstrates how Cognitive Linguistic approaches to CDS can be used to analyse migration discourse in his study of the UK media representation of immigration, in which he extends the theory of Force-Dynamics (Talmy 1988) to show how force-interactive patterns, prompted by elements including particular adverbials, prepositions and various open class elements, can ‘structure our conceptualizations of both physical and political/legal interactions’ around immigration (2011: 283). He argues that through ‘repeated patterns of representation and processes of entrenchment’, these schemas can come to ‘constitute, alongside other idealized cognitive models, the discourse of immigration’, which in many cases frames it in problematic terms.

### *Corpus linguistic approach*

The final approach we discuss here is the corpus linguistic approach. Corpus linguistics is largely an analytical methodology, but also a field of research, which involves using computer software to identify and analyse recurring patterns in a large collection of naturally occurring language data (a *corpus*, pl. *corpora*; see McEnery and Hardie 2012; Brookes and McEnery 2020). To make them amenable to computational analysis, corpora have to be stored in a digital format. The appeal of corpus linguistic methods is that, with computational assistance, analysts can base their observations on a far larger dataset than would be feasible to analyse by hand-and-eye alone. Indeed, it is not unusual for corpora to comprise many millions, and occasionally billions, of words. Furthermore, the software that corpus linguists use can identify features and patterns in the language in the corpus faster and more reliably than the human analyst, and these techniques can also provide a perspective on the data which may not be possible without the help of the computer, but which can be beneficial for identifying discourses. To exemplify this, it is worth considering two staple techniques in corpus linguistics: keywords and collocation analysis.

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Keyness is ‘the statistically significantly higher frequency of particular words or clusters in the corpus under analysis in comparison with another corpus, either a general reference corpus, or a comparable specialized corpus’ (Baker et al. 2008: 278). Targeting such characteristic language use has been fruitful for the identification of discourses in a wide range of corpus-based critical studies of discourse, with such words often treated as ‘signposts’ to recurring themes which are then analysed qualitatively. Collocation refers to ‘the above-chance frequent co-occurrence of two words within a pre-determined span, usually five words on either side of the word under investigation’ (ibid.). Analysis of the collocates of a word of interest has been used to study how that word (and the actor(s), action or concept it denotes) is represented across the texts in the corpus. Collocation analysis is often used as a next-step following keyword analysis and precedes analysis of concordance lines, which provide a more contextualised view of a user-determined word or phrase of interest, with uses of the search-term displayed in the centre of the computer screen along with surrounding text to the left and right.

While corpus linguistic methods are not, in and of themselves, an approach to CDS per se, through corpus linguistic methods CDS researchers can nevertheless broaden their empirical base and reduce the influence of their subjectivity on their analyses by basing these on features of the data that are particularly common or statistically significant. However, the involvement of the human analyst is still fundamental to corpus linguistic methodology, from the research design, to the selection of techniques, parameters and statistical tests, to the interpretation of the output. The analytical software can provide information about the frequency or statistical salience of a particular linguistic feature, but it is up to the human analyst to interpret and explain that pattern and this typically cannot be done without carrying out more qualitative analysis of that particular feature in its original contexts of use. It is at this stage that other theoretical frameworks from CDS (including those introduced above) can be drawn upon. For example, Baker et al. (2008) combined corpus linguistic methods with DHA in order to examine categories of representation in a 140-million-word corpus of British news articles about refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants and migrants. The benefits and limitations of using corpus linguistic methods in CDS are described in detail by Mautner (2015) and discussed briefly by Fairclough (2015: 21-23). Rather than provide further examples of corpus-based CDS research on migration here, we will instead consider what a corpus-based approach can offer to CDS studies of migration by discussing recent research we have carried out on how ideologies around the English language shape the representation of migration in the British press.

#### **4. English language ideologies and migration**

In this section we describe the methodological approach that we took in analysing the representations of migrants and migration in the British press in two recent studies (Wright and Brookes 2019; Brookes and Wright 2020). In terms of the overarching methodological

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procedure followed, we adopted the fundamental techniques of corpus-based CDS that we outlined above. In doing so, we followed a trend which has not only seen migration as being the focus of some of the most seminal and influential corpus-based CDS research (e.g., Baker et al. 2008; Taylor 2014) but also in that we analysed newspaper data. Newspapers are an attractive source of data for CDS researchers given their position as products of socially and economically powerful institutions and their ability to propagate particular ideologies and ideals on a mass scale. At the same time, the publicly accessible nature of newspaper data and the sheer amount that is available on a daily basis are tantalising prospects for corpus-based researchers aiming to broaden their empirical and evidential base. The combination of corpus techniques and CDS can be mutually enforcing, with the benefits of each approach helping to address potential difficulties with the other (Mautner 2015). First, and as we emphasised above, the use of corpora allows analysts to draw on larger, more representative datasets than would be possible using a purely qualitative approach. However, given CDS's commitment to examining and accounting for the interrelationship between discourses and the wider social and historical contexts in which they occur (something which unites and underpins the different theoretical perspectives on CDS), the use of larger datasets must not come at the cost of sanitising the data entirely from the contexts in which it was produced and intended to be consumed. This final point is something which we became increasingly sensitive to as our analysis unfolded, as we will outline below.

One feature of our work which serves to differentiate it from many other critical studies of migrant representation is that our point of departure was not the explicit discursive representation of migrants *per se*. Rather, we set out to examine if and how the English language was used by some areas of the press as a vehicle for nationalistic and xenophobic discourses in light of the 2011 UK Census, which was the first to include language-related questions and found that '138,000 speak no English' (BBC 2013). Our focus was motivated by both the general anti-multilingual, anti-multicultural and 'pro-integration' policies and legislation that have prevailed in the UK since the early 2000s, and the findings of research that has explored the relationships between language ideologies, migration and racism in various international contexts and discourse types (recent examples include, Milani 2007; Lippi-Green 2012; Vessey 2017). Our dataset comprised 2,751 articles and 1.7 million words sourced across six UK national right-leaning newspapers<sup>1</sup> published between 2011 (the year of the Census) and 2016 (Wright and Brookes 2019: 64). The data were collected using the online searchable newspaper database *LexisNexis*, with the criteria for inclusion being that an article had to contain the words *speak* (or *speaks/speaking*) and *English* in its headline or lead paragraph. Despite the size of the sample returned and collected, it is inevitably partial—we cannot be sure that it includes *every* article about English published in this period—but our search term of *speak + English* followed the phrasing of the Census item "How well do you speak English?". Our concluding argument about the nature of the representation that we found in this data was that the portrayal of immigrants who live in the UK and have a first

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<sup>1</sup> *The Telegraph, Daily Mail, The Times, The Express, The Sun* and *The Daily Star*, and their sister/Sunday newspapers, including print and online articles.

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language other than English generally contributes to a broader anti-immigrant UK media narrative which serves to legitimise exclusionary and discriminatory practices against people from minority linguistic and ethnic backgrounds. In other words, newspaper articles that were ostensibly about language and language proficiency were used as sites in which to proliferate and reinforce more general xenophobic ideologies. On this point, we defer to Lippi-Green (2012: 74) who characterises such ideologies (which are in favour of language normativity and homogeneity) as legitimising and propping open a ‘back door’ to prejudicial discourses that would ordinarily be considered xenophobic.

The first step in our method involved using the corpus software package *Wordsmith Tools* (Scott 2016) to conduct a collocation analysis of the phrase *speak English*. This produced a list of the words which appeared within a ten-word window (five to the left, five to the right) of the phrase *speak English* at least five times in our data. Next, inspired by van Leeuwen’s (2008) Social Actor Analysis, we manually examined the list of collocates to determine those which referred to groups of people. Taking this approach allowed us to identify the main social actor groups which were discussed most frequently in the context of speak(ing) English in the articles. We qualitatively analysed the uses of the social actor collocates with *speak English* in our corpus of newspaper articles and, on this basis, manually assigned collocates to the following semantic categories: EDUCATION (consisting of the collocates *pupil(s)*, *(school)children*, *student*, *child*, *teachers*, *kids*, *secondary*), IMMIGRANTS (*immigrant(s)*, *migrant(s)*, *foreigners*) and HEALTH (*doctors*, *nurses*, *staff*, *patients*). These categories were developed inductively over the course of the analysis, and so this was a necessarily interpretive step. However, to help to ensure the robustness of our interpretations, each analyst independently examined the collocates and assigned them to categories, before sharing interpretations and reaching agreement on categories. Although IMMIGRANTS was a somewhat more macro category relative to the other two (e.g., the children and healthcare workers being referred to were immigrants) the three categories helped us determine the targets of the newspaper articles in our data. In particular, the recurrent theme in the reporting in relation to these groups was that they *can’t*, *don’t* or *won’t* speak English or, if they do, then they do not speak English *well* or *fluently* enough.

The next and main stage in the analysis was to examine how these social actor groups are discursively represented in the articles in terms of their (in)ability to speak English. This involved the transition from the quantitatively oriented corpus-derived frequency results to a manual analysis of each instance of every collocate across the three social actor groups in its co-text within the articles. Our interpretation of the representations of these groups also drew upon the notion of topoi (from the DHA, discussed earlier). In particular, our qualitative analysis set out to identify the topoi that were used to represent the aforementioned groups and the ideologies pertaining to linguistic competence, national identity and (im)migration that these topoi encoded. In doing so, we built on existing work that has demonstrated the utility of topoi in critical studies of discriminatory discourse (Reisigl and Wodak 2001), immigration (Hart 2010) and language ideologies in multilingual Britain (Blackledge 2005).

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It should be noted that topoi do not manifest in texts in any set or formulaic way, so their identification represents something of a subjective analytical process. This interpretation is thus importantly driven by the human analyst's observations of the corpus data and the output of computational analytical procedures performed on it (i.e. frequency information, keywords, collocations, etc.). This is a crucial hallmark of corpus linguistics research, where the analysis is carried out by the human, underpinned by their knowledge of linguistic, contextual and theoretical sensitivity, and marks an important point of departure from other, more automated approaches to text analysis (e.g. Topic Modelling; see Brookes and McEneaney (2019) for a critical evaluation).

Our analysis found that there was a considerable focus on the amount or number of non-native English speakers living in the UK, with the figures given varying from article to article. In particular, articles focused on schools which have a high proportion of non-native English-speaking children (e.g., 'Children who speak English as their main language at home are now in the MINORITY in 1,600 schools across Britain' – *Daily Mail*, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2012). We argued that such discourse constitutes and contributes to the topos of *displacement*, the fear that the 'out-group' will eventually outnumber and/or dominate the 'in-group'. Elsewhere, within the topos of *finance*, we found examples of migrants being represented as being a drain on tax-payer's money, a financial burden on schools and the National Health Service and as undeserving beneficiaries of the welfare system. At the same time, schoolchildren who have English as a second language were blamed for 'wasting teachers' time and harming the education of others' (*Express*, 24<sup>th</sup> November 2014) and that 'British children turned away by schools where more than 25 per cent of pupils do not speak English' (*Daily Mail*, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2016). We characterised such representations as relating to the topos of *burdening and weighting down*, insofar as they present the minority out-group as a strain and drain on the members, resources and systems of the in-group to the extent that they threaten to erode the privilege of the English-speaking majority. Finally, within the topos of *danger or threat*, we found a number of stories in which doctors and nurses who do not have English as a first language were represented as a threat to the health and safety of the public (e.g., PATIENTS could be at risk after health chiefs admitted some doctors can't speak English – *Daily Star*, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2011). We argued that these topoi combine to form an over-arching media narrative which consistently problematises non-native English speakers living in the UK. Such a persistently negative representation has the potential to legitimise the social exclusion and active discrimination against those who are perceived to be unable or unwilling to fit the linguistic 'norm'.

As we alluded to earlier, although using corpus assistance in CDS allows for larger datasets to be analysed, as datasets grow so too does the risk that the texts being analysed are removed from their social, political and historical contexts. In this vein, in our subsequent work (Brookes and Wright 2020) we took a more time-sensitive, diachronic perspective to migrant representation in relation to proficiency in English. In reflecting on our earlier work, we made two adjustments to our approach to better connect our texts and contexts. First, we extended

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the timeframe of our corpus by adding seven years of data, including articles published between 2005 and 2010 and those in 2017 (one year more recent than the original study). Our corpus now included six years of data after the 2011 Census point, but also six years *prior*, to capture the political manoeuvring and policy agenda that gave rise to the inclusion of a language question in the Census in the first place (see Sebba 2017). This decision was made in part in response to recent calls for researchers in corpus-based CDS to revisit and restage their corpora and their analyses. Baker and McEnery (2019) point out that corpora, and the discourse analyses conducted on them, are necessarily time-bound and that analysts should not assume the discourse(s) they observe to remain stable in periods before or after that captured by their data. To address this shortcoming, they make the case for extending and repeating CDS research as a means by which to monitor such social and textual dynamism. We coupled this expansion of data with an adjustment to the way in which we identified and analysed collocates of *speak English*. Previous large-scale corpus-based critical studies of migrant representation have focused on ‘consistent collocates’, so-called because they remain frequent and pervasive throughout the entire dataset being considered and do not fluctuate from year-to-year (Gabrielatos and Baker 2008). We took the opposite approach, focusing our analysis on ‘seasonal collocates’, i.e., those which were frequent at some points in time and not others. In taking this approach, we hoped to identify and monitor the changing media narrative and focus in relation to migrants and their proficiency (or otherwise) in English.

Our results found that although non-native English-speaking migrants have been consistently represented in negative and stigmatizing ways by the right-leaning British press, this representation has not been homogenous in nature over the 13 years covered by our corpus. For instance, we observed the gradual broadening of social actors reported as not ‘speaking English’, from exceptional cases such as professional sportspeople, through to generalised and anonymised ‘immigrants’. In the same way, we traced how the responsibility of ‘integration’ of migrants shifted from Government to migrants, to the extent that migrants’ learning English was presented as the sole remedy for fixing British communities that had reportedly already broken down. Finally, we found that arguments for excluding non-native English-speaking migrants from working in public service roles (e.g. in healthcare) were beginning to be extended to excluding such groups from *using* public services. We also found that such discriminatory practices and policies were beginning to infiltrate the private sector, such as travel and hospitality. By revisiting the study, we were able to bring new insights into the press representation of migrants. In particular for our purposes, it forced us to reconsider the role of the 2011 Census in the ‘speak English’ debate, as we called it. Rather than being a watershed moment for the linguistic policing of migrants as we thought, it became clear that it was a symptom, rather than the cause, of a more sustained, long-term negative (mis)representation of migrants in public media discourse, disguised as discussions about language and integration. Indeed, writing in 2022, on the back of another census which asked similar questions about language use, and as the UK continues to navigate its departure from the European Union, the discursive negotiation of and contestation surrounding the

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intersection between linguistic and national identities remain just as topical today as they were in 2011.

## 5. Ethical considerations in CDS

When it comes to ethics and CDS, there are two major considerations that we want to discuss here. The first relates to the principles of methodological responsibility to the field of CDS and its many related and contributing disciplines. The second relates to researcher positionality relative to stakeholders in the research.

As we noted earlier, CDS research is invariably politically motivated. This has often led to criticisms of CDS as being too subjective at the expense of methodological rigour and empiricism (e.g., Widdowson 1998; Breeze 2011). However, critical discourse scholars and others are encouraged here to acknowledge that subjective influences can infiltrate otherwise ‘objective’ research either consciously or subconsciously and that, where possible, transparency and openness to such influences is the most attainable aim. Relevant here is Davies’ (2017: 1461) comments on subjectivity in social sciences and communication research more generally, and the recommendation that rather than attempt to diminish the potential influence of subjectivity, scholars may ‘centralise the subjective position in the research process’ or at least ‘acknowledge that the values and attributes of the investigator are an inevitable aspect of research that cannot be ignored’. Corpus-based approaches, which allow analysts to base their findings on statistically salient features of larger and more representative datasets, have long been thought to alleviate some of the issues of subjectivity which can threaten to undermine the findings of some critical studies, such as the selective use of data and the cherry-picking of convenient examples which suit the analyst’s pre-determined argument (see Stubbs 1997). However, it is important to recognise that such research is not objective by virtue of being driven by frequency and statistical salience. Indeed, corpus assistance cannot *remove* the influence of human subjectivity for the reasons we discussed in Section 3. Rather, the use of corpora can reduce or at least *delay* the influence of the analyst’s subjectivity, by imposing principles of representative data sampling and providing more ‘objective’ analytical starting points in the shape of word frequency and keyword lists. However, as noted, human subjectivity is nevertheless involved at all stages of a corpus analysis, particularly at the qualitative stage, at which point analysts will have to interpret the quantitative patterns identified by the computer (as also acknowledged in textually oriented disciplines more broadly; Barberá et al. (2020)). During this qualitative step, CDS approaches provide rigorous analytical concepts and toolkits and more robust models for understanding and interpreting the role of context in shaping discourse.

Unlike other areas of research such as sociolinguistics, which regularly uses interview or ethnographic data, or psycholinguistics which relies on experimentation, CDS less often directly involves human participants. This is largely due to the underlying aim of CDS of examining how power and social (in)equality are enacted, reproduced, and challenged

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through discourse; the most accessible discursive spaces of such power use/abuse are typically public texts, often produced by political and media institutions. The collection and analysis of texts that are accessible in the public domain rarely poses ethical concerns with regard to privacy, for example. However, as CDS increasingly looks towards online data, this does raise questions regarding what counts as the ‘public domain’, particularly when working with social media data. As Baker and McEnery (2015: 11) note, there is a debate to be had about whether a person making a social media post public is the same as that person giving informed consent to that post being collected, analysed and disseminated as part of a research project. There are recommendations regarding steps that can be taken to protect the identity of individuals in such cases, including removing usernames and reducing searchable quotations (e.g. Franzke et al. 2020). However, at the time of writing, the prevailing opinion in the field appears to be that these considerations are best made on a case-by-case basis (Baker and McEnery 2015) and that considerations of ethical procedures in discourse studies vary widely but remain generally under-discussed (Stommel and de Rijk 2021).

One final point with regard to ethics in CDS extends consideration of human ‘participation’ beyond data accessibility. Even when the texts being analysed are designed for mass public consumption, such as newspaper texts, these texts and their language use can have far-reaching consequences for the social groups concerned. Given CDS’s commitment to challenging forms of social injustice, these groups often occupy a minority or stigmatised status within society. With respect to the studies described in the previous section, the newspaper articles we analysed espouse ideologies and arguments that can lead to discrimination and prejudice against migrant groups and individuals in various ways. For example, Khan (2019) details the implications of language, nationalism and discrimination in the process of acquiring UK citizenship, while stories of language-based abuse are commonplace in the news (e.g., ‘Woman brutally punched for speaking Spanish in racist attack on London overground train’ – *The Independent*, 27<sup>th</sup> October 2019). Therefore, as Graham (2018: 108) reflects, much of the ethical pressure for CDS practitioners turns on a ‘need to go beyond the mere identification of social problems caused, maintained, and concealed by language to develop moral responses to those problems’. Fairclough and Fairclough (2018: 179), for example, argue that the description and critique of discourse and the ‘existing state of affairs’ should be procedurally followed by ‘advocating action to change the existing state of affairs for the better’. The work of Baker et al. (2013) on the representations of Islam in the British press provides an example of how such action to change can be implemented and achieved. In collaboration with the Muslim Engagement and Development (MEND) organisation, their findings have been used to present the facts about press bias and to encourage peaceful redress, allowing MEND to counteract unfair and unsubstantiated claims made about Islam and the Muslim community in the UK (UK Research and Innovation 2022). In turn, the results of the CDS analyses have influenced MEND’s response to the Leveson inquiry into the practices and ethics of the British press, their successful case against *The Sun* newspaper for inaccurate reporting (Independent Press Standards Organisation 2016) and was cited in MEND’s submission to the drafting of the

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Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) bill which was passed and became law in 2021. Baker et al.'s (2013) work remains central to MEND's policy in relation to media and broadcasting (mend.org.uk 2022). Therefore, while it may be an intellectually rewarding endeavour or methodologically intriguing dalliance for scholars to identify and critically examine particular discourses in particular contexts, for CDS to achieve its social aims and ethical obligations, it should endeavour to go beyond the analysis of discourses and towards practically addressing the social injustices that result from those discourses.

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