

## An applied framework for combining immanent critique with corpus assisted discourse studies

Jasper Roe

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# Zeitschrift für Diskursforschung

## Journal for Discourse Studies

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Jasper Roe

# An Applied Framework for Combining Immanent Critique with Corpus Assisted Discourse Studies

**Abstract:** This article describes an applied framework for grounding discourse analysis in the post-Marxist concept of immanent critique. Although linguistic analysis is only one way of undertaking discourse analysis, it remains a powerful method of understanding discourse. On the other hand, immanent critique is effective for grounding discourse analysis, as it provides a clear normative reference point. To date, there is limited literature on undertaking an immanent critique using linguistic data which is analyzed using techniques coming from Corpus Assisted Discourse Studies. This article offers a discussion of immanent critique and how it can be undertaken using CADS techniques, focusing on sociological discourse analysis through linguistic data. The model moves beyond traditional models of linguistic analysis by focusing not only on presence, but also on absence. The description of the framework is followed by an applied example of investigating a social issue in online news media, by analyzing linguistic data for frequencies of specific terms, patterns of collocation, and close qualitative analysis of individual concordance lines. From the results, broader hypotheses can be formulated to provide an immanent critique.

**Keywords:** Immanent Critique, CADS, Online Media, Discourse Analysis

**Zusammenfassung:** Dieser Artikel beschreibt einen analytischen Rahmen, der die Diskursanalyse auf das postmarxistische Konzept der immanenten Kritik stützt. Obwohl die linguistische Analyse nur eine Möglichkeit der Diskursanalyse darstellt, bleibt sie eine wirkungsvolle Methode des Verständnisses von Diskursen. Andererseits ist die immanente Kritik eine effektive Grundlage für die Diskursanalyse, da sie einen klaren normativen Bezugspunkt bietet. Bislang gibt es nur wenig Literatur über die Durchführung einer immanenten Kritik anhand von linguistischen Daten, die mit Techniken der korpusgestützten Diskursforschung (Corpus Assisted Discourse Studies) analysiert werden. Dieser Artikel diskutiert das Konzept der immanenten Kritik und zeigt auf, wie eine solche Kritik mit Hilfe von CADS-Techniken durchgeführt werden kann, wobei der Schwerpunkt auf der soziologischen Diskursanalyse durch linguistische Daten liegt. Das in dem Beitrag vorgestellte Modell geht über traditionelle Modelle der linguistischen Analyse hinaus, indem es sich nicht nur auf Anwesenheit, sondern auch auf Abwesenheit konzentriert. Auf die Beschreibung des analytischen Rahmens folgt ein Anwendungsbeispiel für die Untersuchung eines sozialen Problems in Online-Nachrichtenmedien durch die Analyse linguistischer Daten im Hinblick auf die Häufigkeit bestimmter Begriffe, Kollokationsmuster und eine genaue qualitative Analyse einzelner Konkordanzlinien. Aus den Ergebnissen können weitergehende Hypothesen formuliert werden, um eine immanente Kritik zu üben.

**Schlagwörter:** Immanente Kritik, CADS, Online-Medien, Diskursanalyse

## 1 Introduction

The goal of this work is to give a convincing argument for the use of certain forms of linguistic analysis techniques developed from Corpus Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) in order to achieve a broader, sociological discourse analysis. This discourse analysis can then be integrated with the post-Marxist concept of immanent critique, in which societies' aspirations are held up to their ideals, and necessary contradictions which create social pathologies are revealed. It is argued that this is a flexible method that combines elements of discourse analysis from both sociology and applied corpus linguistics. The paper is structured firstly by clarifying the distinctions between different definitions of discourse and explaining how sociological discourse analysis can be achieved through analysis of linguistic data. This is followed by a treatment of immanent critique, with a formulation of immanent critique anchored in universal norms which is suitable to the research method being described. Finally, an example is given of how such analysis can move beyond traditional methods of linguistic data use, dealing with presence (what is there) to include linguistic or discursive absence (what is not present), and how this can be a meaningful approach for empirical research. The method described is argued to be an effective and flexible way of revealing social pathologies through applied examination of real-world data.

## 2 Understanding the Definition of Discourse in the Research Model

Discourse analysis is a broad and multidisciplinary notion that stretches across many fields (Koteyko 2006). Discourse can be viewed as constellations of repeated meaning (Stubbs 2001), or as »the rules (practices, technologies) which make a certain statement possible to occur and others not at particular times, places and institutional locations« (Foucault 1989, p. 21). Discourse can also relate to purely linguistic analysis, and the term can at times be used indiscriminately (Jorgensen/Phillips 2002). This can be exemplified by Critical Discourse Analysis, which fuses the linguistic and critical theory definitions of the term (Fairclough 1992) and the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA), which identifies that discourse is inextricable from the »broader sociopolitical context within which discursive practices are embedded« (Richardson/Wodak 2009, p. 255). In this research, sociological discourse analysis is the focus, but this realized through linguistic analysis using Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) techniques. By taking a sociological approach, the relative depth and richness of sociology can inform and underpin the linguistic analysis, which allows the researcher to move away from just the text as the unit of analysis (Keller 2013). Discourse then, in this work, is defined in this study as an institutionalized way of speaking (Foucault 2002), or as a set of statements which apply restrictions to meaning (Jorgensen/Philipp 2002), and a practice which is used to give meaning to reality (Ruiz Ruiz 2009). This clarification is important, so that linguistic analysis can be distinguished from sociological discourse analysis, as although aspects of sociological discourse may seem to be linguistic practice, they are at their core social (Herzog 2016, p. 74).

### **3 The Role of Corpus Assisted Discourse Studies in a Sociological Discourse Analysis**

Having explained the formulation of discourse used in this article, the next area of importance is to clarify CADS and the epistemological foundations which allow CADS to be useful for an immanent critique-based investigation. CADS as a term was coined by Partington (2004) to describe the evolving field of studies using corpus linguistics techniques to explore discourse. CADS techniques are generally based on using a corpus, or collection of texts, for analysis through either qualitative or quantitative means. Such corpus techniques are useful for »tracing the incremental effect of discourse« (Baker 2006, p. 16) and can also offer deep insight into the »cumulative ideological effect« of language, its repetition, and its use in context (Koteyko 2014). Examples of techniques often used include frequency lists, which identify the most commonly used terms in a corpus, or keyword analysis, which compares the occurrence of certain keywords in one collection of texts to another collection known as a reference corpus. CADS techniques are also effective as they often encompass a mixture of quantitative and qualitative techniques, which can be considered as triangulating when looking for results (Baker/Egbert 2016). CADS then, refers to a set of techniques involving the use of language corpora to search for answers to certain questions related to the broad definition of discourse studies.

One of most important reason for proposing CADS techniques for developing an immanent critique is not the effectiveness of the techniques themselves, it is that these techniques have been applied to many research studies which aim to produce a critique of society, or certain aspects of society. Perhaps one of the most pivotal papers which developed this approach is that of Baker et al.'s (2008) examination of the depiction of refugees in UK media, which combines Corpus Linguistics with Critical Discourse Analysis. This landmark paper demonstrated that corpus techniques are effective for dealing with large amounts of data to engage in Critical Discourse Analysis. This said, there is a well-known issue with Critical Discourse Analysis, which is that it is often undertaken from an explicit sociopolitical stance, namely that of the researcher(s) (van Dijk 1993). Undertaking such research from a sociopolitical stance means that the normative criteria used for analysis are subjective, and as a result may change over time, or lead to the imposition of the norms of a social group (Herzog 2016). The solution to this perennial issue of subjectivity then, can be solved by using immanent critique, thus giving rise to the need for a framework which integrates CADS research with immanent critique.

### **4 Setting a Basis for Immanent Critique Using CADS Techniques**

When undertaking discourse analysis as social critique, as can happen in CDA approaches, the explicit sociopolitical stance of the researcher(s) results in criticism from a subjective position. Immanent critique on the other hand, is based on highlighting the aspirations internal to a society in question, and exposing contradictions between the reality of

the society's actions and state of being (Wrenn 2016). This is therefore more effective as a form of criticism, as the basis of the criticism comes from within (Harvey 1990). In other words, immanent critique does not come with the subjective standards of the researcher, but the standards are derived from the object of criticism itself (Stahl 2013). Consequently, immanent critique can help to identify the gaps between the ideals of society, and the reality of what is (Gotham 2007).

It is worth noting that much like with discourse, immanent critique is polysemous (Petrova 2018) and as a result can refer to a wide range of practices in both philosophy and hermeneutics (Sabia 2010). Others have criticized immanent critique as being culturally relativistic, as it can only measure a society against its own criteria for success (ibid.). However, the formulation of immanent critique in this research addresses such a criticism, by grounding all societies in an overriding universal norm. From this basis, there is a sound system for providing immanent critique, namely, by identifying whether any identified discursive practices are compatible, or incompatible with such a norm.

The universal norm in question is that societies aim towards reducing unnecessary social suffering (Herzog 2016, 2019). This is rooted in the idea that suffering is democratic, as it can be felt by all, and that it is pre-scientific and pre-linguistic. In essence, the intrinsic wrongness of unnecessary social suffering can be conceived as a universal moral fact (Procyszyn 2019). Moral universalism has been described as an empirical given in our societies (Honneth 2012) and such universals are embedded in basic personal capacities (Habermas 2001). By positing this universal norm, the criticisms of cultural relativism (Sabia 2010) and the normative ideals of the researcher are no longer issues that hold back the effectiveness of discourse analysis as social criticism. The next step in this model then, is to locate existing norms in society for comparison to the universal norm, and identify whether a necessary contradiction exists between the two. It is here where the use of CADS techniques comes into its own, as social norms can be identified through discourse analysis, which can be effectively undertaken using CADS techniques to analyze linguistic data. The methodological choice that needs to be made next, is where to find such norms. In the applied example, media text is chosen for this as a site of discursive struggle (Maia 2014).

## 5 Using CADS Techniques to Identify Social Norms through Presence and Absence

To use CADS techniques to identify social norms requires detailed collection and analysis of data. Prior to this, it is necessary to clarify the foundations of the model so far. At this point, four points have been established for this methodological framework, as follows:

- 1) Sociological discourse analysis can be undertaken through linguistic analysis, and social norms can be found in linguistic data.
- 2) CADS techniques can be used for research that provides social criticism based on analysis of language in corpora.

- 3) Immanent Critique based on a universal norm is a more effective form of social critique than other forms undertaken from a specific subjective standpoint.
- 4) CADS and Immanent Critique can work together, as such analysis can identify norms in linguistic data, which can be compared against an overriding universal norm.

With these points in mind, the next stage is to focus deeply on how social norms can be realized through the analysis of corpus text. This can refer to what is both present, i.e. appears in the corpus, and what is absent, i.e. what does not appear in the corpus.

In terms of presence, CADS techniques such as generating a frequency list can be a good starting point. A frequency list details all of the tokens (or words) that appear in the corpus, often in descending order of appearance. A high density of words which relate to certain judgements, concepts, or ideas, can therefore offer a trace of discourse, and so has been described as a useful start when employing corpora for discourse analysis (Baker 2006). Another common technique used in corpus linguistics and CADS is that of collocation analysis. Collocation analysis describes the relationship between vocabulary items that occur together. Collocation analysis can reveal social norms, as they reveal the most salient relationships surrounding a subject (*ibid.*) and can even contribute to mental priming, where viewing one word triggers thinking of another (Durrant/Doherty 2010). This can be called expectancy relations (Paltridge 2011) and can suggest powerful discourses and social norms.

More qualitative techniques that can complement quantitative techniques such as frequency analysis and collocation analysis can also be used to triangulate findings and validity-check hypotheses (Baker/Egbert 2016). Concordance analysis is one example, which consists of extracting selected lines of text from the corpus (concordances) and then analyzing them for content. These CADS techniques together then, are one set of tools which can be used to identify and understand social norms and discourses through the analysis of linguistic data. This can then be compared to the aspirational universal norm of reducing unnecessary social suffering; if the two are by their nature (necessarily) incompatible, then an immanent critique is achieved.

However, CADS techniques do not need to just focus on linguistic and discursive presence; they can also focus on absence. Discursive absence can be just revealing of uncritically accepted concepts and social norms, which has also been called the hegemonic discourse order (Baker 2006). CADS has a wide range of tools for revealing and investigating absence (Partington/Duguid 2013). Linguistically, this may take the form of uncovering grammatical constructions which leave out certain subjects or actors, for example the use of the passive voice in order to elide a subject, or in a more abstract sense, absence may be revealed by using hypothesized alternatives, through rephrasing, or recasting texts in a different manner. Absence then, can be found through the analysis of linguistic features, or through researcher-led introspection and the contemplation of alternative discourses (Schroter/Taylor 2018). Having identified several ways of locating social norms and understanding discourses using CADS techniques, a general framework and empirical example can be further detailed.



## 6 A Five-Step Framework for Conducting an Immanent Critique through CADS

In the above, a basis for immanent critique through the analysis of discourse utilizing linguistic data has been established, and certain CADS techniques have been suggested and explained. In order to use an empirical study based on the compatibility of CADS and Immanent Critique, a framework should then focus on five steps as described below.

- (1) The first step is to select a social phenomenon that warrants investigation and attention, and formulate a research question. This social phenomenon should then be deeply studied in order to understand the context and detail of the phenomena. Only then can the emergence of meaning in the discourse take place (Scholz 2019). This initial research phase can lead the researcher to hypotheses of a contradiction between a universal norm of reducing unnecessary social suffering (Herzog 2016, 2019) and the social reality.
- (2) Based on this initial understanding, and an observation of a possible contradiction between the universal norm and the social norms present in the discourse, a dataset must be created for analysis. This should be based on a corpus of text or multimodal data. Corpora can vary in size, but as a specific social phenomenon is being studied, a small, specialized and purpose-built corpus is the most suitable. The corpus must strive then, to be representative of a given situation, and while greater numbers of texts provide richer data, greater size does not always indicate greater quality (Koester 2010). Having collected a set of texts, they must be processed, cleaned, and compiled into a searchable corpus using a corpus analysis tool.
- (3) The researcher may now select the most suitable CADS techniques for engaging with the data in order to answer the research questions. This could include a focus on quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods approaches. Techniques described so far include those for identifying presence (such as keyword or frequency analysis) and those for absence (such as researcher-led introspection). The use of software for sampling may also be considered at this point, as sampling can be automatically programmed if using a third-generation corpus analysis programme (Tribble 2010), as can other techniques useful for data analysis.
- (4) The following step is to conduct close and thorough analysis of data. The researcher must work reflexively to identify patterns, relationships, and meaningful presences or absences in the data which reasonably suggest the presence of distinct social norms which by their nature contravene the universal norm of reducing unnecessary social suffering. If such social norms are found within the discourses, then there is sufficient evidence to complete an immanent critique and identify social pathologies, through this recognition of a necessary contradiction in the social order.
- (5) If the hypothesised norms are found, and there is sufficient evidence for an immanent critique, then a leap must be made from the linguistic to the level of social totality, although this is not a leap in the dark (Ruiz Ruiz 2009). This means moving away from the data and identifying whether the findings can be generalized to the macro-social

level, or whether there is significant evidence elsewhere, in other domains, of the social norms identified. This can be considered stepping away from the corpus in order to make better interpretations (Baker 2015). Crucially, having completed the process, the researcher must consider how the results can point towards meaningful human interventions that can give rise to social change (Herzog 2016).

## 7 An Empirical Example of the Framework

In the following empirical example, media text is chosen to build a corpus. While the researcher may use any genre, or a variety of genres, to build a corpus, media text is uniquely suited to such studies. News media text is chosen as it has been described as an area for the production of discourse (Baker 2006), and as a »major source of evidence for grounding claims about social structures, relations, and processes and an important resource for understanding social structures« (Fairclough 1992, p. 111). Further to this, online news media text is particularly effective for this variety of study, as it is accessible, freely available, instantly updated, and has been described as contributing to the creation of new partial public spheres (Wiedemann 2019). Additionally, media representations of issues can act as a resource for the creation of mental models in both groups and individuals and can impact the individual's sense of self (Maia 2014). In the empirical application of this five-step framework, online news media text from the United Kingdom is used to build a small, specialized corpus for analysis. The situation selected is the ongoing Rohingya crises, a series of humanitarian issues that have been occurring in Myanmar and Bangladesh for decades. Throughout 2017 to 2021, the situation has intensified and worsened, eventually leading to a small West African state, The Gambia, initiating legal proceedings to prevent genocide at the International Court of Justice in December 2020. These complicated issues have been simplified in the media, undergoing what could be called discursive simplification (Venkatamaran 2018) as »editorialists around the world have taken an easy approach to a complicated issue« (Leider 2013, p. 249). However, The Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has identified that the root causes of this series of crises is caused by a long history of discrimination and persecution of the Rohingya minority, which could amount to crimes against humanity (OHCHR 2017). The first step commences with an investigation of the historical and socio-political context of the crises, as below.

(1) After identification of the Rohingya crises as the object of study, with the root cause described by the OHCHR as a long history of persecution based on discrimination (OHCHR 2017), the historical context was studied and understood. Following this, further investigation into the social role of exclusion and discrimination was completed, and the research questions were selected. The research questions selected were: 1. What are the discourses of the Rohingya crises in UK online media and 2. do the social norms located in the text contradict the universal norm of reducing unnecessary social suffering?

Through this initial research phase, it was found that social exclusion is related to othering and social categorization, which has been called a basic cognitive process which arose from the social groups of today's ancestors' conflicts between ingroups and outgroups

(Strangor/Jhangiani/Tarry 2014). Despite this possible evolutionary basis, when these tendencies create discrimination, persecution, and suffering, they necessarily conflict with the universal norm of reducing unnecessary social suffering. Strangor, Jhangiani and Tarry (2014) contend that discrimination dies when the existing social norms do not allow it, suggesting that it is not a universal and ever-present social norm, but one that must be fed by society in order to stay alive. Having hypothesized a norm that is current and present in the society being studied, the next step is to research whether there is implicit or explicit acceptance of such social norms in the discourses contained within the corpus.

(2) To form a corpus, it was decided to focus on online news media in the United Kingdom, as a new social location (Scholz 2019) which can represent new partial public spheres (Wiedemann 2019). In order to develop a representative corpus, information was collected on those publications which had the greatest readership, therefore offering the best representation of the larger discourse order.

Using information from the Office of Communication, a public body under the UK government, and the Publishers Audience Measurement Company, a private data collection company, 15 online news media publications were selected, including BBC News, Sky News, The Sun, The Mirror, The Mail, The Metro, The Guardian, The Independent, The Express, The Telegraph, The Evening Standard, The Times, The Daily Star, The Daily Record, and The I. A pilot study was undertaken to determine a feasible number of texts to collect, text availability and methods of collection. Full-length text articles were then collected in reverse chronological order until a quota of a minimum of 10 articles per publication were collected or no further results were available. A total of 142 articles were collected for inclusion in the corpus, spanning from the beginning of the intensification of the crisis in January 2017 to December 2020 when data collection was completed. The criteria for inclusion were that the headline must have featured »Rohingya« in the title and the article must have focused on the Rohingya crisis. Articles were collected through the online repositories of each publication, using the search function. The 142 articles in total gave a corpus size of 93,218 words.

(3) Having compiled a corpus representative of a social phenomenon, the next step was to choose the CADS techniques suitable to the research questions.

In order to find an answer to this question, techniques were chosen to identify social norms in the discourses of the corpus. The first technique chosen was to establish the most common words in the corpus using a frequency analysis. This gives an insight into the common terms used when discussing the crisis. The second CADS technique chosen was collocation analysis. Collocation analysis can suggest unconscious associations which can maintain certain discourses (Baker/Gabrielatos 2008). As a result, identifying patterns of frequently occurring words can help to signify social norms in the discourse. Finally, a more qualitative technique of concordance analysis was chosen to complement the frequency and collocation analysis. Concordance analysis involves sampling sentences obtained from the corpus and reading them closely to identify patterns.

In order to move beyond traditional linguistic analysis of presence, to answer the research questions fully an approach was chosen to also address absence. In this case, the researcher chose to use an integrated approach at each level, considering through intro-

spection and thinkable alternatives (Schroter/Taylor 2018) what could be absent from the data, and how this could give insight into what discourses are present, during each stage of the frequency, collocation, and concordance analysis.

4) The results were then collated after analysis took place. The initial results of the frequency analysis are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Frequencies in the corpus for lexical words

Term	Frequency	Percentage of Corpus
Rohingya	1,092	1.2 %
Myanmar	987	1.1 %
Refugees	439	0.5 %
International	255	0.3 %
Genocide	255	0.3 %
Rights	218	0.2 %
Government	206	0.2 %
State	205	0.2 %
Human	171	0.2 %
Violence	153	0.2 %
Flee	139	0.2 %
Just/Justice	90	0.1 %
Crisis	120	0.1 %
Crime	100	0.1 %
Cleansing	87	0.1 %

As can be seen above, frequent mentions of justice, internationality, and rights occurred in the corpus. These initially provide an impression that there is something of global significance, affecting human rights, and that justice is a key element of the discourse. In terms of absence, there is no appearance of persecution, discrimination, or exclusion at this level. When considering thinkable alternatives (Schroter/Taylor 2018) an oppositional frequency list could be considered, one that included such terms.

Following this, collocation analysis was undertaken for each of the most frequent terms. The findings suggested a discourse of extreme and immediate suffering, with terms such as »crisis« collocating with terms such as »horror«, »slaughter«, and »horrific«, while »Rohingya« is highly correlated with »destroy«, »protect«, and »kill«. Additionally, »crime« is correlated with »atrocities«, »genocide«, and »heinous« and »right« is correlated with »protect«, »violation«, and »citizenship«. This suggests that broadly, from this section of the analysis, there is evidence of discursive representations which recognize the Rohingya's right not to experience unnecessary suffering. This is then evidence of the universal norm that such suffering should be removed from society. Strong

collocations which imply moral outrage such as ›heinous crime‹ are present. However, while this is the case, the results of the collocation analysis again are conspicuously absent of mentions of the root cause of the crisis: discrimination and exclusion. While this may partly be due to the requirements of the genre of news media to simplify stories to meet a word count, called discursive simplification (Venkatamaran 2018), this does not fully explain an absence of such a critical cause of suffering in the media discourse, and possibly as a representation of the wider public sphere. The use of contrasting findings with thinkable alternatives (Schroter/Taylor 2018) using the sociological imagination confirms that this is the case. For example, ›persecuted‹, ›excluded‹, and ›othered‹ or ›discriminated against‹ could all appear highly in the frequency list, but do not.

To further build on the quantitative analyses, a qualitative concordance analysis was chosen. This involved obtaining samples of every 10<sup>th</sup> line of the 93,218 word corpus for each term in the frequency analysis, reading them closely, and then contrasting the findings with those of the frequency and collocation analysis. The results confirmed that while the discourses of the Rohingya crises in UK online media correspond overwhelmingly with sympathy, recognition of the right not to suffer, and moral outrage at the campaign of persecution undertaken against them, there is little discussion of the role of discrimination, ethnic persecution, or social exclusion as the driving forces behind this crisis, and other social crises worldwide. It is possible that such absence hints at the hegemonic discourse order (Baker 2006), in which such norms are uncritically accepted.

(5) The findings suggest that in this discourse, there is expression of sympathy, moral outrage, and recognition of the right not to suffer unnecessarily. However, there is possibly implicit acceptance of the social norm of exclusion, discrimination, and othering (also known as social categorization), or at the very least, a lack of engagement with the root causes. There is an absence of engagement with this topic and its well-established role in causing the Rohingya crises. This may suggest that the current social reality, in which exclusion is accepted uncritically, necessarily contradicts with the universal norm of reducing unnecessary suffering. If media discourses are taken as part of a new public sphere, this may suggest a social pathology. If so, this constitutes an immanent critique, as demonstrated through the use of CADS techniques working with linguistic data.

The final step in this process is to reflect on the findings and look at other situations to see whether further research demonstrates that the findings are reproducible or can be extrapolated to the level of social totality (Ruiz Ruiz 2009). The leap in this context is to suggest that the norms found in online media of discrimination and exclusion being uncritically accepted as a part of the social fabric can be generalized to society at large and the wider public sphere of the United Kingdom.

## 8 Conclusion

This article has elaborated a framework for the use of immanent critique, as a flexible tool for identifying and examining gaps between social ideals and reality (Gotham 2007), in combination with the corpus-assisted discourse studies techniques of analyzing linguistic

data to produce sociological discourse analysis. The five-step framework shows promise and applicability through the example of the analysis of the discourses of the Rohingya crises in online media in the United Kingdom. The results demonstrate that it is possible to identify traces of discourse (Baker 2006) using CADS techniques which can then lead to the identification of social norms. In terms of how this functions in the applied example, the findings suggest that there is a tendency in the UK media discourses, and potentially the UK public sphere to uncritically accept the root causes of an international crisis as a given in society, as there is a clear discursive absence of identification, criticism, or acknowledgement of the normative social processes which lead to such unnecessary social suffering. As this occurs simultaneously with expressions of lamentation, moral outrage, and discourses of sympathy, this suggests that there is a direct contradiction between the willingness to let harmful social norms go unchecked as part of the hegemonic discourse order (Baker 2006).

The example of the five-step framework also demonstrates the efficacy of triangulating an approach using quantitative and qualitative CADS techniques, including focusing on frequency analysis as a beginning point (Baker 2006), collocation analysis to identify the patterns in which words occur with one another, and concordance analysis to achieve deeper, more qualitative interpretation of discourse. This demonstrated the suitability of the mix, achieving the »marriage of comparative statistical techniques with researcher inferencing from data« (Partington 2018, p. 121) and effective triangulation. This was combined with researcher-led introspection to move beyond linguistic and discursive presence and also consider absence through thinkable alternatives (Schroter/Taylor, 2018). However, immanent critique through CADS is not limited to these techniques alone, and further applications of this framework may be possible with a range of other sociolinguistic analysis tools.

In summary, as a novel framework, immanent critique in combination with CADS techniques offers a new way to counteract the problem of analyzing discourse through non-explained or opaque normative criteria. By grounding such analysis in a universal norm, and then identifying social norms through the analysis of the corpus, a more coherent critique can be achieved, thus »boring from within« (Harvey 1990, p. 5). However, this framework does require a conceptual leap from the text to the level of social totality (Ruiz Ruiz 2009). Further research and applications of this framework may lead to new ways of understanding and interpreting discourse from a sociological standpoint along with the generation of new sociological knowledge and identification of areas in which social change can occur.

## Data availability

The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are not publicly available due to size constraints but are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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*Anschrift:*

Jasper Roe  
 PhD Candidate, School of Social Sciences  
 University of Valencia, Spain  
 Av. de Blasco Ibáñez, 13  
 46010 València, Valencia  
 Spain  
[jasro2@alumni.uv.es](mailto:jasro2@alumni.uv.es)