

Alan Partington, Alison Dugiud and Charlotte Taylor. *Patterns and meanings in discourse. Theory and practice in corpus-assisted discourse studies* (CADS). Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 2013. 371 pp. ISBN 9-789-027-20360-1. Reviewed by **Paul Baker**, Lancaster University.

Patterns and meanings in discourse is both literally and metaphorically weighty – its 371 pages cover its subject in a way that is simultaneously broad and deep. The first chapter of the book (actually Chapter 0) covers aims and key concepts as well as giving an overview of the book's structure. The chapter following this, acts as a more theoretical introduction which informs the later analysis chapters, focussing on the idiom or collocational principle and the open-choice principle of language. Hoey's concept of lexical priming is also discussed in this chapter, and together these first two chapters provide a good yet not overly dense coverage of theory and background for beginners. Moving on from this, the middle ten chapters of the book illustrate how Corpus Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) can be applied to a wide range of different fields, making good use of up-to-date and thought-provoking case studies which encompass stylistics, politeness, metaphor, evaluation, social actor representation and irony among others. A concluding chapter returns to and reflects further on theory and key principles.

The book makes use of a range of corpus tools (WordSmith Tools, Sketch Engine, AntConc, Xaira, the BYU online interface) which potentially act as both a pro and a con. As a pro they help to demonstrate the range and utility of different analysis software that are available. However, for beginners, across the whole book there may be a lot to take in and familiarise oneself with, and a potential barrier to carrying out analyses on corpora is in getting used to the idiosyncrasies of different software, along with attendant regex search terminology, navigation of menus and windows and varying affordances in terms of processes, statistical tests and default settings. The authors acknowledge this early in the book on p. 15 when they note how various software identify the concept of a word differently, resulting in conflicting word counts when trying to describe the size of the same corpus. While Chapter 0 provides an overview of

commonly used procedures (frequency, keyness, clusters, dispersion), and later there is discussion of more advanced concepts like key keywords and concordance keywords, the book is not aimed at the absolute most basic level in terms of telling first year students which keystroke or buttons to press to achieve the same results.

With regard to international markets, the book mainly makes use of British, then American corpora, although it is heartening to see that Chapter 7 is devoted to cross-linguistic discourse analysis, and features comparisons of representations of migrants in the Italian and UK press. This chapter also contains a useful section which reflects on the methodological challenges faced by researchers who want to carry out cross-linguistic CADS. Additionally, Chapter 5 contains newspaper corpora in both Italian and English, when looking at anti-American sentiment.

It is perhaps a common criticism (one I level at myself) that discourse analysts can focus on press discourse at the expense of other genres, and while many of the analysis chapters in this excellent book do make use of newspaper corpora (particularly British broadsheet news), it is good to see corpora which cover the fiction of PG Wodehouse (Chapter 6), White House press briefings (Chapter 8), the Hutton Inquiry (Chapters 8 and 9) and House of Commons debates (Chapter 9). On p. 240, there is mention of Hardaker's work on trolling, and it would be interesting to see how CADS can contribute towards analysis of computer mediated media in the future.

The authors note that a few of the studies in the book have been referred to in earlier publications but in each case the material has been updated, recontextualised and expanded upon. This certainly does not feel like a disparate collection of unrelated essays but a united and coherent development of a means of applying corpus methods towards different yet related aspects of discourse analysis. All of the chapters in the book are well-referenced, and the analysis chapters in particular are very well provided for in terms of locating themselves in relationship to other people's research. These literature review sections have a friendly, collegial tone to them, and the thoroughness here is likely to save future researchers working in this area a great deal of time when they are starting out.

There are two main aspects that I took away most clearly from this book. The first was a sense of pleasure – at times almost of joy – at this form of analysis which enables researchers to make new discoveries. The revelatory pleasure brought on through serendipity is discussed most clearly in the introduction chapter on p. 9 but shines throughout the whole book. The way that CADS can help analysts to light upon findings through chance, or to unearth questions that

they may not have been thought of at the start of a piece of research ‘raising new puzzles’ (also p. 9) is rightly described as fascinating.

Secondly, I was impressed by the strong sense of the commitment of the three authors to methodological rigour and transparency within this field. This also manifests itself from the outset with Section 0.3.1 on aims referring to the importance of uncovering *non-obvious meaning* (or as I tend to put it, less elegantly – avoiding ‘so what’ findings). A central goal of CADS is to use corpus methods to tell the reader something that they did not know already, and this was amply demonstrated in several places where the authors carried out their own analysis of a word or construction which had been looked at previously by other corpus linguists, and revealed something new – see for example the section looking at non-obvious meaning surrounding *sit through* (pp. 75–77).

Another example of methodological rigour and sophistication occurs in Chapter 11 where there is discussion of the importance of taking (the often overlooked) dimension of similarity into account, alongside more popular analysis of differences, when carrying out comparative study, along with a useful survey of ways that similarity analysis can be operationalised.

This theme of commitment continues into the concluding chapter (Chapter 12) where the authors reflect on the importance of finding counter-examples in corpora, advocating Popperian methods. This chapter also contains a warning about over-interpreting findings particularly from newspaper corpora where “negativity is one of the chief news values” (p. 338). In disassociating the CADS approach from “politicised discourse analysts” (p. 339), the authors argue that stating one’s political position (as done in critical discourse analysis) in advance of carrying out a politically-motivated form of research does not necessarily result in a more honest or rigorous analysis. This is an important point, contributing towards a wider debate over the role of political commitment towards discourse analysis.

Chapter 11, which is perhaps most pertinent in terms of illustrating the CADS perspective on this debate, examines the construction of anti-Semitism in British broadsheets from different time periods, then compares representations of BOY and GIRL in the same corpora. In the former case, it was found that anti-Semitism was seen as mostly ‘historic’ in the 1993 news articles, while by 2005, anti-Semitism is viewed by the press as being rife and back in fashion. The study on BOY and GIRL notes similarities between the two concepts but also indicates how GIRL tends to be used in sexualised contexts, and is semantically closer to WOMAN than BOY is to MAN. The authors do not appear to explicitly critically evaluate these findings from a political perspective, perhaps allowing readers to impose their own evaluations on them. Also, they do not

seem to give politically motivated reasons for choosing to examine these phenomena – it is noted on pp. 283–284 that an earlier study had identified terms relating to anti-Semitism as consistently frequent over time in the corpora being used whereas the examination of GIRL and BOY seems motivated by a desire to demonstrate methodological rigour and compare findings to other work on the same topic (rather from the authors stating e.g. an explicitly feminist commitment). Having been influenced by both CADS and CDA, I would have found it interesting to know if these were the only reasons why these topics were chosen, and whether the authors considered their findings to be socially/politically troubling, but at the same time, I respect how other analysts could find such an approach to be problematic for numerous reasons. (I hold out hope that CADS and CDA can acknowledge differences but learn new tricks from one another.) The book will be a valuable addition to reading lists on Corpus Linguistics and Discourse Analysis modules as well as making more experienced practitioners pause repeatedly for thought. It is engagingly written and has a clear structure and layout, making good use of explanatory Appendices as well as Author and Subject indexes. The analysis chapters all end with suggestions for further research which could be incorporated into seminar activities or coursework. This is a book that I will be recommending to my own students. It will also inform my future research efforts.