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# DN33

**Discourse, Sustainability,  
and Education:  
Interdisciplinary  
Perspectives on Climate  
and Communication**

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*Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Climate and Communication*

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**Book of Abstracts**

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# Preface

This Book of Abstracts brings together the contributions presented at the 33<sup>rd</sup> DiscourseNet Conference (DN33)-*Discourse, Sustainability, and Education: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Climate and Communication*-held on 26-27 March 2026 at the University of International Studies of Rome (UNINT).

The conference is inspired by the growing recognition that sustainability and climate change are not only scientific or technical challenges, but also profoundly discursive phenomena. How climate issues are framed, narrated, debated, and taught greatly influences public understanding, political decision-making, educational policies, and possibilities of collective action. Against this backdrop, DN33 set out to explore the central role of discourse in mediating environmental knowledge, values, responsibilities, and futures across institutional, media, educational, and everyday contexts.

The response to the Call for Papers was both enthusiastic and international, resulting in over 60 submissions from researchers working in a wide range of geographical contexts and disciplinary traditions, spanning from discourse studies, linguistics, education, media and communication studies, sociology, environmental humanities, political science and related fields. From a methodological point of view, the abstracts reflect the diversity encountered in contemporary discourse research, encompassing critical, multimodal, narrative, corpus-based, ethnographic, interactional, and practice-oriented approaches.

A distinctive feature of DN33 is its explicit focus on the intersection of discourse, sustainability, and education. Many contributors engage with questions of pedagogy, literacy, and learning, examining how climate and sustainability discourses circulate within educational settings and how communicative practices may foster-or hinder-critical awareness, agency, and transformative change. Others address media representations, institutional and corporate communication, digital platforms, activism, policy discourse, and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, highlighting the complex communicative ecologies in which climate meanings are produced and contested.

The conference is organised by UNINT in collaboration with DiscourseNet, whose long-standing commitment to fostering interdisciplinary dialogue in discourse studies provides the intellectual framework for this event. We are also grateful for the precious endorsement of Dis-4Change, the inter-university research centre, which recognises the relevance of this conference to broader debates on sustainability, social transformation, and responsible communication.

The Book of Abstracts is organised to support both thematic exploration and ease of consultation. Following the keynote addresses, contributions are grouped thematically to reflect the main strands of discussion developed during the conference. An alphabetical index of contributions is also provided to facilitate navigation.

*Marina Brancaccio & Cristina Benicchi*

DN33 Organising Committee

University of International Studies of Rome (UNINT)

# Keynote Addresses

**Prof. Hermine Penz**

University of Graz, Graz, Austria

**Title:** *Climate change and sustainability: Discourses of adaptation and mitigation for a livable future*

## **Abstract**

Climate change is already affecting every region of the globe and its impacts are becoming more and more evident. The Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) of the IPCC states this very clearly and focuses on the interdependence of climate, ecosystems, biodiversity and human society. It assesses the impacts and risks of climate change and adaptation to these in relation to “biodiversity loss, unsustainable consumption of natural resources, land and ecosystem degradation, rapid urbanisation, human demographic shifts, social and economic inequalities.” (IPCC 2023: 3)

Climate change and sustainability are intricately connected (see Hulme 2009) as attempts to combat climate change by reducing greenhouse gases by various ways such as using low carbon and renewable energy, will not be sufficient to deal with the issue. In addition, adaptation will be crucial to ensure a livable future. These mitigation and adaptation efforts need to embrace sustainable development.

This presentation will use ecological discourse analysis to investigate the discourses of various actors in their attempts to find solutions for the climate crisis and a livable future, for example the promotion of nuclear energy as ‘sustainable’ energy (IAEA 2024), solutions that promote degrowth (Hickel 2022), and a radical system change as laid out by the 2022 Report of the Club of Rome. Extracts from these discourses will be analysed with a focus on the dominant frames and metaphors applied and will be judged against their contribution to sustainability. For this purpose, the term ‘sustainability’ and its definition will be reviewed critically, suggestions for its redefinition will be made and the different discourses will be assessed on the basis of this revised definition.

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**Prof. Antonio López**

John Cabot University, Rome, Italy

**Title:** *Ecomedia Literacy as a Catalyst for Engaging Environmental Discourses of the SDGs in Higher Education*

**Abstract**

This paper argues that ecomedia literacy provides a robust framework for the study and use of environmental discourses in relation to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within higher education (López, 2024). Ecomedia literacy equips learners to critically analyze and produce media that not only reflect—but also challenge and reshape—the narratives surrounding sustainability, integrating ecological, cultural, and socio-economic aspects found at the heart of the SDGs. By highlighting both the “ecomedia footprint” (the environmental impact of media technologies) and the “ecomedia mindprint” (the ideologies and narratives media propagate), the paper examines how interdisciplinary activities cultivate the ability to interpret, critique, and contribute to contemporary environmental discourses (López, 2021).

Building on ecocritical discourse analysis (Garrard, 2011) and ecolinguistics (Stibbe, 2021), this approach engages students in discourse analysis, media production, infographics, and reflective writing to expose greenwashing, confront climate disinformation, and explore the representation of SDG-related themes across platforms. Embedding ecomedia literacy within university curricula not only deepens students’ understanding of environmental language but empowers them to become informed, responsible communicators and advocates for sustainability and ecojustice. In doing so, ecomedia literacy bridges scientific and humanistic perspectives, connects local and global contexts, and advances critical engagement with the ideological and material realities of sustainability discourses.

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# Thematic Table of Contents

[1. Energy Transitions, Technology & Sustainability](#)

[2. Climate Policy, Institutions & Governance](#)

[3. Media Framing & Climate Journalism](#)

[4. Digital Platforms, Algorithms & Climate Communication](#)

[5. Climate Activism, Resistance & Counter-Discourses](#)

[6. Education, Pedagogy & Climate Literacy](#)

[7. Multimodality, Semiotics & Meaning-Making](#)

[8. Ideology, Identity & Climate Subjectivities](#)

[9. Culture, Language & Environmental Worldviews](#)

[10. AI, Data & Computational Approaches to Climate Discourse](#)

## 1. Energy Transitions, Technology & Sustainability

[Franck, T.](#): *The Discursive Construction of the Energy Transition in the French-speaking Press The Case of Le Soir (2022–2024)*

[Horsbøl, A., & Eskjær, M.](#): *Localizing CCUS: Discourses of Emerging Energy Technologies Between Risk and Opportunity*

[Lupano, E., & Scaringella, F.](#): *Framing Renewables in Chinese Public Discourse: Analysis of Five Case Studies of Energy Community*

[Meledandri, F., & Falco, G.](#): *Does Pollyanna rhetoric really conceal corporate transparency? A multimodal analysis of Sustainable Reports*

## 2. Climate Policy, Institutions & Governance

[Del Gaudio, A.](#): *Appraising Corporate OPINION on EU Environmental Reporting Standards: Evaluative Language in Feedback and Public Consultations*

[Di Gregorio, G.](#): *From annual reports to social media: representational features of sustainability disclosure in aviation industry*

[Flores, W.](#): *Swiss Climate Policy Discourse in a Time of Crises A contrastive analysis of the debates surrounding the CO2-Act revision and the Climate and Innovation Act*

[Lazar, I.I.](#): *Discursive Framing in the Communication Strategies of Romanian Local Councillors in Italy*

[Jovanovic Padejski, D.](#): *Environmental Framing Across Political Systems: Discourse and Evaluation in U.S./British and Russian Independent News Media*

[Radut-Gaghi, L.](#): *Epistemic communities, climate and COPs*

## 3. Media Framing & Climate Journalism

[Chirac, M.](#): *Reconfiguring climate attention in Romanian television broadcasts: journalistic framing as a response to “green fatigue”*

[Molek-Kozakowska, K.](#): *Discursive strategies of making environmental sustainability issues newsworthy (again)*

[Šarić, L., & Trnavac, R.](#): *Representing Climate Change in South Slavic Online News*

[Stasiuk-Krajewska, K.](#): *Discourses of climate change in the context of discursive practices around disinformation*

[Subin, P.](#): *Monsoon News in the Age of Climate Change: Journalistic Vernaculars in Weather Reporting in India*

[Van Praet, W.](#), & [Lams, L.](#): *Framing climate change in Australian, British, and Canadian children's news: An ecolinguistic study*

#### **4. Digital Platforms, Algorithms & Climate Communication**

[Amendolara, V.](#): *Doomscrolling while communicating the climate crisis: Thematic clusters and linguistic patterns in YT Shorts comment sections*

[Boccia Artieri, G.](#), [Brilli, S.](#), [Serafini, L.](#), & [Parente, F.M.](#): *Opinion climates: frames of truth about climate change on Facebook amid misinformation, fact-checking and counterframing*

[Buonvivere, L.](#), & [Lamonaca, M.](#): *Environmental Frames Across Languages: English and Spanish Media Discourse on Extreme Weather Events in California*

[Causa, S.](#): *Dear 2045: Climate Change Discourse through Sound Reuse on TikTok*

[Gurevich, L.](#): *Navigating Semiotic Ecosystems: The Perils and Protocols of Multimodal Crisis Communication*

[Lorenzetti, M.L.](#): *Multimodal Framing of Climate Change on Activist Groups' Social Media Pages: A Contrastive Perspective*

#### **5. Climate Activism, Resistance & Counter-Discourses**

[Magazzù, G.](#): *Political Iconoclasm: How Media Narratives Shape the Meaning of Climate Activism*

[Moreira Pedro, A.](#): *The preservation of the environment in Brazil through the demarcation of Indigenous Lands: a study of the discourse against the "Marco Temporal" (Time Limit) argument*

[Sambre, P.](#): *Counterframing Arson and Wildfires: Ecomafie, Antimafia and Spatialisation in Climate Discourses on Southern Italy*

[Sioupi, D.M.](#), & [Sioupi, A.](#): *Reframing Security and Defense: The case of "Green Military"*

#### **6. Education, Pedagogy & Climate Literacy**

[Drury, M.](#), [Darics, E.](#), [Wildfeuer, J.](#), & [Markantoni, M.](#): *Fostering sustainability or rebranding business-as-usual: critical language awareness in entrepreneurship education*

[Lewis Wuebben, D.](#): *Frames of Responsibility: Climate Fiction, Energy Literacy, and Discursive Agency in Sustainability Education*

[Natale, A.](#): *Performing Climate Action: From Moral Imperatives to Collective Agency in English Children's Media*

[Rubino, G.](#): *EcoAI Literacies: Framing Ecoliteracy and Artificial Intelligence in Civic Education Discourse*

[Simione, L.](#), [Colombo, S.L.](#), & [Raffone, A.](#): *Defining Environmental Awareness: Conceptual Ambiguities and Practical Implications for Climate Communication*

[Tolis, V.](#): *Discourse analysis, experiential learning, authentic assessment: three perspectives in search of a triadology?*

## **7. Multimodality, Semiotics & Meaning-Making**

[Bevitori, C.](#), & [Johnson, J.H.](#): *Telling time, reading sustainable futures: where linguistics meets anthropology in the discursive construction of climate change*

[Bressler, M.](#), [Bischetti, L.](#), & [Bambini, V.](#): *Green pragmatics: a narrative review of pragmatic tools in climate change communication*

[Intorcchia, E.](#): *Shifting the narrative: climate storytelling by "Open Planet". An Ecolinguistic and Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis*

[Jacobs, T.](#), & [Vossen, K.C.](#): *Temporal imaginaries in discourses on eco-citizenship*

## **8. Ideology, Identity & Climate Subjectivities**

[Angermüller, J.](#): *Climate change discourse. Or, why truth is discursive, too*

[Chaouachi, M.](#): *L'ennemi écologique: continuités discursives dans la construction du danger*

[Russo, K.E.](#): *Common Sense in Climate Change Crisis Discourse: Environmental Disasters in News, Political and Public Discourse*

[Schleier, I.](#): *Constructing a Sceptical Self: Identity & Legitimation in Climate Sceptic Blogs*

[Schmidt, S.](#): *Discursive Construction of Legitimacy in Climate Politics*

[Veloso Da Silva, A.](#), & [Gueli, Z.](#): *"Make the Planet Green Again": A critical discourse analysis of right-wing populist climate communication*

## **9. Culture, Language & Environmental Worldviews**

[Faria, R.](#): *David and Goliath – how David resisted corporate power, reclaimed sustainability and social justice, and won.*

[Hosokawa, N.](#): *Ecological Epistemology and Discourses of Linguistic Diversity: A Case Study of Breton Language Education*

[Utz, A.](#): *Local specificity and horizontal social complexity: Why globally dominant discourses always marginalize real sustainability*

## **10. AI, Data & Computational Approaches to Climate Discourse**

[Glasson, B.](#): *AI's green paradox: The discursive politics of AI's environmental self-presentation*

[Russo, M.](#), & [Vallego, J.](#): *Embedding Ecological Futures: Word Embeddings, Narrative Ethics, and the Potential of AI in Reframing Environmental Discourse*

# Abstracts Section

## Panel 1: Energy Transitions, Technology & Sustainability

Abstract title: *The Discursive Construction of the Energy Transition in the French-speaking Press The Case of Le Soir (2022–2024)*

Author: **Thomas Franck**

Affiliation: Ghent University

This research aims to justify a corpus devoted to the term “*energy transition*” in the French-speaking press over a specific time period. Although the focus is on a short contemporary period, this synchronous analysis is situated within the broader context of the long-term history of energy systems, technological development, Anglo-European capitalism, and wider structures of domination and global geopolitical dynamics. The narrow temporal focus (2022-2024) is based on the hypothesis that a discursive crystallisation is occurring alongside significant political, economic, and social events shaping current energy perceptions. However, rather than implying dehistoricisation, this heuristic approach must be situated within a broader historical framework extending at least to the 1960s (see Wagener 2025 for a longitudinal approach). Key events during this period include the first recorded use of the term in 1967, the 1973 oil crisis and the creation of the International Energy Agency in 1974. Subsequent international agreements, such as the establishment of the IPCC in 1988, have also shaped this context. A preliminary socio-historical approach, in the continuity of York & Bell (2019) and Fressoz (2024) is used to guide the process and place the studied discourses within a broader historical context.

Following this initial contextualisation, the corpus analysis methodology employs a macro-corpus comprising 2.820 articles from *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, *Libération*, *Le Soir* and *La Libre Belgique*, which has been processed using the Hyperbase lexicometric tool. Additionally, a micro-corpus of pertinent articles from *Le Soir* and *La Libre Belgique* is considered in a qualitative perspective. These are then compared using French discourse analysis tools. The aim is to understand how these media discourses highlight implicit tensions relating to different ideological conceptions of the climate and environmental crisis, as well as sustainability issues raised by the “*energy transition*”, a highly charged formula (Krieg-Planque 2009 and Hilgert, Kleiber & Palma 2023). Our focus is on the period from 2022 to 2024, which falls between the outbreak of the war in Ukraine and Donald Trump's re-election – two pivotal geopolitical events in the history of global energy.

This research hypothesises that, situated at the intersection of various ideological formations (such as conservatism *versus* liberalism, or fear of change *versus* technosolutionism), newspapers bring different points of view (Rabatel 2017 and 2021) into tension around a discourse formula. The pragmatic effects of these points of view deserve detailed study in order to understand how the media shape and are influenced by public opinion (in a dialectical logic). The combination of applied corpus linguistics and original French discourse analysis offers a useful case study for understanding the current climate and environmental sustainability crisis, in a socio-discursive perspective.

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Abstract title: ***Localizing CCUS: Discourses of Emerging Energy Technologies Between Risk and Opportunity***

Author: **Anders Horsbøl, Mikkel Eskjær**

Affiliation: Aalborg University, Denmark

The transition to renewable energy is crucial for mitigating climate change. Emerging energy technologies (EETs) - including power-to-X, carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS), and sustainable aviation fuels - are increasingly framed as key components of the future energy mix. While research on EETs has been primarily technical, social science approaches have focused on social acceptance, and discourse studies remain scarce with some exceptions at the intersection of discourse and media studies (Nerlich & Jaspal, 2013; Christley & Ullström, 2024; Horsbøl & Eskjær, 2025).

However, the societal implications of EETs are still uncertain and subject to ongoing negotiation. A central aspect of this negotiation involves localizing EETs by connecting them to specific places and communities and thereby making them meaningful through projected local impacts.

This paper examines the localization of EETs in Denmark based on a systematic sample of news media texts on CCUS from 2019–2024 (n=102), a period marked by a sharp rise in coverage. Drawing on a discourse-historical framework (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009), the analysis examines representations of CCUS impact on four Danish sites frequently mentioned in the sample. It identifies key topoi framing CCUS supported by a micro-level analysis of how CCUS is represented as an actor in material processes and evaluated in terms of local impact (Fairclough, 2003; Jeffries, 2010). Preliminary findings indicate the prevalence of a promissory discourse (Nerlich et al., 2023) of local opportunities in combination with critical voices emphasizing environmental risk.

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Abstract title: ***Framing Renewables in Chinese Public Discourse: Analysis of Five Case Studies of Energy Community***

Author: **Emma Lupano, Francesco Scaringella**

Affiliation: University of Cagliari, University of Milan

In recent years, China has been strongly promoting the development and implementation of renewable energy sources as part of its “double carbon” (双碳) policy, as evidenced by the document entitled 关于大力实施可再生能源替代行动的指导意见 [“Guiding Opinions on Vigorously Implementing Renewable Energy Substitution Actions”] issued by the National Development and Reform Commission in 2024 (NDRC, 2024).

This paper stems from the [data have been removed to ensure anonymous submission] research project and focuses on how renewable energies are discussed and promoted in Chinese newspapers (including *The People’s Daily* and *The Paper*) and social media, drawing on five case studies that include both urban and rural settings, community-level initiatives, and private enterprises.

Relying on a quantitative and qualitative analysis of a corpus currently consisting of 43 texts, the study explores how the discourse on renewable energies is framed (Entman, 1993; Goffman, 1974) in China, with particular emphasis on the metaphors that structure it. Framing in terms of “Development and Innovation” and “Community and Participation” emerges as predominant, positively highlighting the practical advantages for citizens and leveraging their sense of community to encourage participation to a key national policy.

By offering insights into the strategies used in Chinese public discourse to promote sustainable behaviour and citizen participation, and by investigating how discursive patterns can shape public perception and legitimise policies in a distinct cultural and political environment, this study contributes to the broader academic discussion on sustainability and discourse.

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Abstract title: ***Does Pollyanna rhetoric really conceal corporate transparency? A multimodal analysis of Sustainable Reports***

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Transparency is a vital component of corporate communication, playing a crucial role in building trust, ensuring accountability, and promoting a sustainable and ethical business environment. By prioritising clear communication, organisations can enhance their reputation and foster stronger engagement with stakeholders. This is especially relevant for major energy companies grappling with environmental issues, particularly in the wake of recent disasters linked to climate change. Research shows that while these companies recognise the seriousness of the crisis, they often employ excessively optimistic verbal and non-verbal language strategies (Falco & Meledandri, 2025) that diminish the urgency and scope of environmental challenges. This positivity bias, commonly referred to as Pollyannaism (Hildebrandt & Snyder, 1981), may conflict with the imperative for transparency and accountability, which are elements critical to cultivating trust and resilience (International <IR> Framework, 2021, p. 29).

In this context, this paper aims to address the following research questions: Does the Pollyanna rhetoric really obscure the “honesty” and “integrity” of corporate messaging? Does it impede corporate responsibility? Adopting an integrated methodology that draws upon corporate crisis communication (Coombs & Holladay, 2022), pragmatic studies (Trosborg, 2010), metaphor theories (Waymer, 2018), and the social semiotic approach to multimodality (Koller, 2009), the paper analyses a corpus of Sustainability Reports issued by international energy companies between 2020 and 2024. The findings indicate that both verbal and non-verbal modes of communication – such as speech acts, verbal metaphors, and visual metaphors – are employed to convey conflicting intentions within these Sustainability Reports.

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## Panel 2: Climate Policy, Institutions & Governance

Abstract title: ***Appraising Corporate OPINION on EU Environmental Reporting Standards: Evaluative Language in Feedback and Public Consultations***

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The adoption of the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS) within the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) marks a major shift in the European Union's strategy for promoting transparency and accountability in the shift towards a sustainable economy. The transition from voluntary to mandatory environmental reporting aims to ensure compliance, foster long-term growth and efficiency, and standardise corporate environmental communication (Aiezza, 2020; Sharma, 2025). However, the design and implementation of such frameworks often raise concerns about how these regulations are perceived and contested by corporate actors. To address this, the European Commission currently conducts public consultations and feedback through which corporations, citizens and other stakeholders express their opinions on "policies and added values of the EU action for new initiatives, or evaluations of existing policies and laws" (Biermann et al. 2019: 3).

While previous studies have mainly focused on the EU's institutional environmental discourse (e.g., Bevitori & Russo, 2023; Russo & Bevitori, 2024; Krzyżanowski, 2013, 2015; Molek-Kozakowska, 2024), little attention has been paid to public consultation texts. This study addresses this gap by investigating how opinions published by corporations and other stakeholders regarding the CSRD and ESRS are constructed through evaluative language. Drawing on the Appraisal Framework (Bednarek, 2008, 2009; Benítez-Castro & Hidalgo Tenorio, 2019; Martin & White, 2005), the study analyses evaluative language through the opinion subsystem within a manually annotated corpus of feedback and public consultation texts (FePCon EU corpus) compiled from the European Commission's *Have Your Say* webpage.

Findings will shed light on support, criticism, or scepticism towards EU environmental sustainability regulations for corporations. Furthermore, the study provides implications for how such discursive practices serve as a site of negotiation between policy language and public moral evaluation, revealing how corporate actors shape sustainability governance.

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Abstract title: ***From annual reports to social media: representational features of sustainability disclosure in aviation industry***

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Corporate transparency and environmental reporting have become critical components of modern business practices, due to the increasing demand from stakeholders for companies to demonstrate their environmental commitment. As argued by Giordano (2024), companies refer to corporate websites as the primary interface to interact with stakeholders, where transparency determines the possibility of establishing and maintaining corporate credibility and trust.

Considering remediation processes that occur when printed texts are translated into online pages or social media contents, as Malavasi (2017) argued, what happens to sustainability disclosure? According to Garzone et al. (2007), these 'new' forms of communication contribute to corporate image-building and promotion, favouring the emergence of new genres, which are shaped by multimodality and characterised by specific effects in terms of textual strategies, rhetorical practices and language use. For this reason, relying on Critical Discourse Analysis and Multimodal Discourse Analysis, the present corpus-informed research seeks to investigate the representational features of sustainability disclosure in websites and social media profiles that belong to some selected aviation companies that operate in Europe (Lufthansa, Air France, British Airways, Ryanair, Wizz Air, EasyJet), both Low-Cost (LCC) and Full-Service (FSC), paying specific attention to reports from 2020 to 2025, in order to define the role played by transparency and persuasion strategies in addressing stakeholders, highlighting to what extent voluntary disclosure is influenced by European regulations.

Preliminary results show that airlines have implemented both their websites and social media profiles in order to foster communication based on transparency, focusing on reductions of both costs and carbon emissions. Their

communication relies on a set of persuasive strategies, such as providing reliable and systematic facts, conveying achievements and trust, and appealing to readers' emotions and preferences. Moreover, as suggested by both Marongiu (2024) and Vogel (2019), companies strive to express their personal stance by balancing communication between the requirement of emotional detachment, as appropriate in corporate reporting, and their individual need to express their attitude in favour of sustainability to define an original corporate identity.

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Abstract title: ***Swiss Climate Policy Discourse in a Time of Crises. A contrastive analysis of the debates surrounding the CO2-Act revision and the Climate and Innovation Act***

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Highlighted by a worldwide youth mobilization, the climate crisis dominated the 2019 Swiss federal elections, leading to a "green tide" (Bernhard 2020: 1340–1341). Yet, subsequent legislative initiatives faced backlash, while new crises, such as the Covid pandemic and the Ukraine War, came to dominate the agenda. For instance, voter rejection of the CO2-Act revision in a 2021 referendum was considered a major setback for the country's climate ambitions (O'Sullivan 2025), while approval of the Climate and Innovation Act two years later was seen as a partial comeback (ibid.). This raises the question whether there have been discursive shifts between these referenda. Accordingly, this study seeks to implement a comparative approach to critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Van Dijk 2015: 466) by contrasting the political debates in the media and in Parliament, surrounding Switzerland's CO2-Act revision and the Climate and Innovation Act. The corpus consists of articles published in three major newspapers from Switzerland's German-speaking region (Blick, NZZ and Tages-Anzeiger) in the months leading up to each of the two referenda, as well as protocols of Federal Assembly debates from that time. Using methods such as collocation analysis, the quantitative corpus linguistic analysis of this corpus, combined with a qualitative assessment on a sample of representative articles and protocols, seeks to identify and quantify the discursive tools, such as metaphors (Huang/Liu 2025: 1) and semantic reinterpretations (Meer 2023: 176), used to frame climate-policy debates and possibly reflecting the balance of power between supporters and opponents of the two aforementioned climate laws. Through this mixed-methods approach, this study also intends to clarify whether discursive shifts correlate with the emergence of the Covid pandemic or the Ukraine War.

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Abstract title: ***Discursive Framing in the Communication Strategies of Romanian Local Councillors in Italy***

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This research aims to analyse how sustainability is communicated in dominant thematic frames in the discourse of 600 Facebook posts, between 2020-2025, of 10 councillors of Romanian origin, elected to the Local Councils of medium and large Italian cities (between 3,000 - 1,000,000 inhabitants), deeply involved in activities that promote cultural values and ecological practices at the local level. The main objective is to identify how public discourse can transform sustainability into a cultural act, by integrating local heritage, community involvement and ecological education. Speaking about environmental sustainability as a “cultural act” means considering actions in favour of the environment as significant practices that relate to the community’s shared patrimony, traditions and values and that promote the transmission and preservation of this local heritage. The Romanian ethnic origin of the councillors does not directly influence the content of their discourses on environmental sustainability. However, it provides a relevant contextual element for the analysis of the way in which the discourse is formulated, especially in terms of linguistic and rhetorical means. The theoretical approach is based on the specialized literature on cultural sustainability and heritage conservation. (Larsen & Logan, 2018), emphasizing the role of traditional values in strengthening social cohesion and the adoption of sustainable behaviours, as well as civic participation and eco-education, which show that active citizen involvement and interactive pedagogical messages increase environmental awareness and community mobilization (Dobson, 2007; Ardoin et al., 2023). The methodological approach is based on the concept of framing in journalism and public communication, according to which the way problems and solutions are formulated influences the perceptions and behaviours of the public (Scheufele, 1999; Entman, 1993; Catenaccio et al., 2023). The findings highlight how cultural/heritage, participatory, ecological educational and innovative/urban frameworks are used to raise community awareness of sustainability.

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Abstract title: ***Environmental Framing Across Political Systems: Discourse and Evaluation in U.S./British and Russian Independent News Media***

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This study provides a comparative, corpus-assisted discourse analysis of environmental terminology in U.S./British and Russian independent news media. The dataset was constructed by querying the online archives of NPR, CNN, *The Conversation*, *The New York Times*, and the Russian Independent Media Archive (*Novaya Gazeta*, *The Moscow Times*, *Meduza*, *Echo Moscow*) using the keywords *environment*, *energy*, *gas*, and *pollution*, and filtering for content published between 2019 and 2024.

The analysis combines keyword, collocation, and concordance methods with interpretive discourse analysis to examine how environmental terms are framed, evaluated, and embedded within broader political narratives. Results show that U.S./British outlets construct environmental issues through evaluative lexis emphasizing urgency, accountability, and policy complexity, while also demonstrating strong intertextual pull toward conventional terminology such as *climate change*, despite stylistic preferences for alternatives like *climate crisis* or *climate emergency*.

In Russian independent media, environmental discourse remains closely tied to domestic politics and international relations. Lexical patterns reveal recurrent associations with state policy, regulatory failures, and energy dependence, centering the oil and gas in Russia’s political economy. Although independent outlets maintain a critical stance, their grammatical and lexical choices frequently index elements of dominant state framing, indicating a discursive environment shaped by structural political constraints.

The study advances scholarship on media discourse by demonstrating how political system type shapes the semantic and pragmatic trajectories of environmental terminology, and by showing that journalistic uptake of environmental language operates as a strategic, yet constrained process shaped by power, intertextuality, and institutional context.

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Abstract title: ***Epistemic communities, climate and COPs***

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Our research is part of the UNKNOWNPATH project (Paths of Scientific Reasoning in the public debate on Climate Change. The Uncertainty of Knowledge), which explores discourse surrounding the Conferences of the Parties (COP), with a focus on COP 26, 27 and 28.

This presentation will be the first opportunity to present our conceptual framework around the significance of COPs in terms of knowledge system around specific épistémè (Foucault, 1966). Our research question is how epistemic communities (Haas 1992, Adler, Faubert, 2022, Howorth, 2004, Bueger, 2014) are being formed and are continually evolving during the COPs?

We will focus on the successive appropriations of climate issues in several public forums:

- the identification of *actors* in discursive production on the *social media* (Twitter (COP 26 and 27) and X (COP 28));
- the production of *public epistemic knowledge* through extra-discursive productions in the *hyperlinks* contained in tweets;
- the formation of *epistemic communities*, considering the above as well as *official declarations and reports* during the COPs.

We then aim to apply two filters for verifying epistemic communities: *scientific validity* using the WeLearn tool developed at the Learning Planet Institute in Paris; and *public knowledge* formation through the study of arguments. Methodologically, we mobilise three complementary components: (1) digital methods to map actors, topics and communities (Rogers, 2013 ; Niederer, 2019); (2) a large language model developed by Adel Tayebi at CY Cergy Paris University to detect and verify the epistemic production; and (3) qualitative discourse appropriation analysis (Radut-Gaghi, 2021) in the French discursivist tradition (Maingueneau, 2014).

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## Panel 3: Media Framing & Climate Journalism

Abstract title: ***Reconfiguring climate attention in Romanian television broadcasts: journalistic framing as a response to “green fatigue”***

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The climate crisis is generating environmental fatigue among the public (VanDeveer, 2003), characterized by feelings of powerlessness, anxiety, and demobilization in the face of the scale of the challenges. In this context, solutions journalism (McIntyre, 2019) is emerging as a media approach capable of presenting concrete initiatives, promoting collective action, and proposing constructive alternatives, by using frameworks that highlight concrete action, real progress, community engagement and innovation (Boykoff & Roberts, 2007; Nisbet, 2009; Carvalho & Peterson, 2012). Our approach aims to

explore how Romanian television programs on environmental issues can move beyond simply stating problems to offer engaging and action-oriented narratives. The methodology of this research combines Entman's (1993; Entman et al., 2009) functional framing theory with an inductive approach to identifying emerging frames, inspired by the work of D'Angelo & Shaw (2018) and by methodological research on inductive frame analysis (de Vreese & Lecheler, 2012; Lecheler et al. 2013). The corpus consists of several editions of three television programs about the environment, broadcast in 2025, all following the logic of solutions journalism: *E vremea ta!* ("It's your weather!") on Channel 2 of the Romanian Public Television (TVR2); *Pro Verde* ("Pro Green") on PRO TV, the commercial channel with the largest audience; *Planeta ești tu!* ("The planet is you!") on Digi24, a 24-hour news television channel. The analysis highlights how these programs construct thematic frameworks for understanding climate issues, articulating shared responsibility of social actors, empowerment, local/citizen perspective, systemic perspective and innovation and promoting concrete, hopeful initiatives. This intersection of functional framing theory (problem definition, causal attribution, values and solutions) and inductive framing analysis thus offers a relevant interpretive framework for understanding how Romanian television programs shape more constructive environmental communication, centred on finding solutions and citizen engagement.

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Abstract title: *Discursive strategies of making environmental sustainability issues newsworthy (again)*

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In recent years environmental advocates had to respond to such challenges as (1) the rise of right-wing populism, with its antiscientific climate-change-denialism, (2) the outbreak of armed conflicts, with security threats displacing environmental concerns, and (3) the advances in AI technologies, with the industry hype and social risks of AI overshadowing the data centers' growing environmental burden. To confront this lowered sense of priority and the fatigue with sustainability issues (Stibbe, 2014), environmental communicators resort to a range of discursive strategies to represent environmental issues as newsworthy (e.g., marked by impact, negativity, personalization, proximity, superlativeness, timeliness or unexpectedness) in order to continue engaging broader audiences (Bednarek & Caple, 2017).

This study reviews selected scholarship on sustainability discourses produced by activists, educators and popularizers to provide a background for a report on a case study of *The Conversation's* publications in "Imagine" – an "award-winning weekly climate action newsletter." The study identifies legitimization techniques for prioritizing certain means of combating ecological crises through rationalization, authorization, moral evaluation or mythopoesis (van Leeuwen, 2007). It also looks at stance markers for preferable forms of environmental activism and public mobilization, particularly through perspectivisation and mitigation/intensification (Reisigl, 2017). It illustrates emergent discursive strategies and analyzes linguistic resources that are being recruited to make climate advocacy newsworthy again, and, on this basis, it offers evidence-based recommendations for environmental communicators and sustainability educators.

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Abstract title: *Representing Climate Change in South Slavic Online News*

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This study examines how climate change is represented in South Slavic online media, focusing on agency and news values across verbal and visual modalities, with particular attention to reported speech. We link agency to broader questions of responsibility representation and ask: Who is depicted as a victim and who as a perpetrator, and by which linguistic and visual means? Are social actors and modes of action framed locally or globally? How do agency and news values interact, and how are they connected to metaphorical patterns? Which persuasion models dominate, and how are they tied to reported speech?

To address these questions, and drawing on theoretical frameworks developed by Steen et al. (2010), Bednarek & Caple (2017), O'Neill (2020), and Semino & Short (2004) we annotated our preliminary dataset for news values, textual and visual metaphors, types of visual representations, and types of quotations.

Preliminary findings from Croatian data show that Impact and Negativity are the predominant news values. Humanity is most often represented as the Goal and as victims, in both literal and metaphorical portrayals. News stories rarely highlight initiatives that could foster a sense of agency, and climate change is mainly presented as a global problem, frequently accompanied by images of distant locations. This discursive pattern creates a narrative that feels remote and insufficiently relevant to the average reader.

We will contextualize these results by examining additional South Slavic online sources to identify shared patterns as well as country-specific differences.

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Abstract title: ***Discourses of climate change in the context of discursive practices around disinformation***

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Disinformation constitutes a significant set of discursive practices (Foucault 1972) present in contemporary social media, reinterpreting existing hegemonic discourses (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985) or producing discourses opposed to them in the field of climate change. These discursive practices are diverse in nature, but fake news occupies a special position in this context, characterized by specific semantic and structural features that allow it to be analyzed as a separate genre pattern (Lazer et al., 2018).

On the other hand, in line with the common strategy of counteracting disinformation, fact-checking organizations conduct extensive communication activities, verifying disinformation messages, thus producing a separate set of discursive practices. In this case, I consider a specific multimodal communication structure called “fact-check” to be a typical discursive practice, which also follows a relatively stable genre pattern (Stasiuk-Krajewska, 2023). Such discursive practices update (perpetuate) discourses that can be considered hegemonic in the field of climate change.

The presentation will focus on discursive practices involving fake news and “fact-checks” in the context of the discursive elements they update. The analytical model used will be a multi-level discourse analysis model (Warnke & Spitzmüller, 2008), including: discourse-oriented analysis; interaction roles; visual text structure; macrostructures; microstructures; and word analysis (keywords).

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Abstract title: ***Monsoon News in the Age of Climate Change: Journalistic Vernaculars in Weather Reporting in India***

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This project is concerned with the study of journalistic vocabularies and tropes (or what is sometimes referred to as “vernaculars”) used in weather reporting, a domain that until recently was neglected in journalism studies (Bødker and Simonsen, 2024; Callison, 2014). It qualitatively interprets and thematizes the vernaculars employed in reporting on a dominant seasonal weather phenomenon in South Asia: the monsoon. As an atmospheric-aqueous phenomenon, the monsoon is central to the Indian subcontinent’s agriculture and daily life due to its association with rainfall (Ul-Ihthisam and Menon, 2022). I focus on monsoon coverage during the 2023-2024 period in an India-based science newsmagazine, *Down to Earth* (DTE). Drawing on literature from interdisciplinary fields such as science and technology studies and media anthropology, I identify several vernaculars at work in DTE’s monsoon reportage—from summarizing the findings of scientific studies in lay terms to retelling popular monsoonal myths in conversational formats; from portraying the monsoon-induced travails of grassroots communities with solemn gravitas to evoking cherished gastronomical memories related to the monsoon in personalized tones. The journalistic use of an array of vernaculars helped DTE bridge the longstanding divide between news as storytelling and news as information (Bird and Dardenne, 2009). DTE, furthermore, highlighted climate change as a proximate threat in its monsoon coverage. This project contributes to journalism studies by rethinking the prevailing assumption that weather reporting is insignificant to democratic processes. It shows that such reporting can, in fact, highlight the effects of weather on local communities whose labor sustains national economies, particularly in developing democracies.

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Abstract title: ***Framing climate change in Australian, British, and Canadian children's news: An ecolinguistic study***

Author: **Wout Van Praet, Lutgard Lams**

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This study investigates how climate change is framed in three English-language children's news programmes: *Behind the News* (Australia), *BBC Newsround* (United Kingdom), and *CBC Kids News* (Canada). As key educational media for young audiences, these programmes play an important role in shaping how children and teenagers understand and emotionally engage with global issues such as climate change. Yet, despite their influence, little research has examined how children's news constructs the climate issue and to what extent it promotes constructive engagement.

Drawing on previous research on climate framing in news media (e.g. Moernaut, Mast & Pauwels 2018; Nisbet 2009; Schäfer & O'Neill 2017), the study adopts a deductive frame analysis to identify and compare dominant frames in the three programmes. The analysis asks to what extent they align with principles of constructive journalism, which emphasises solution-oriented reporting, empowerment, and hope rather than fear or paralysis. By situating the findings within an ecolinguistic perspective, the study also considers how language choices contribute to representations of agency, responsibility, and emotional tone.

Moreover, the cross-national comparison examines how different programmes – in different media systems, cultural contexts and geographical locations – negotiate the balance between factual accuracy, engagement, and optimism. Ultimately, the study contributes to understanding how journalistic framing can foster informed and constructive attitudes toward climate change among young audiences.

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#### Panel 4: Digital Platforms, Algorithms & Climate Communication

Abstract title: ***Doomscrolling while communicating the climate crisis: Thematic clusters and linguistic patterns in YT Shorts comment sections***

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Social media constitute a form of “digitally-mediated communication” (Cotgrove et al., 2025). Their multimodal affordances significantly facilitate (and consequently promote) the dissemination of certain thought patterns and behavioral norms, which are the representation of specific societal discourse clusters (Van Dijk, 2008). Short videos, or simply "shorts", represent an increasingly successful video format that is consumed on a daily basis by users, enabling the aforementioned process. The vertical, mobile-first, and bite-sized format of these videos, coupled with the infinite-scrolling-feature, has firmly established its effective communicative potential. YouTube (YT) Shorts were only recently introduced on the platform (2021), therefore constituting a research gap, especially concerning linguistic user behavior in the comment sections of such videos. On the basis of corpus-assisted methodologies, climate-related YT Shorts comments in three languages (English, Italian, and German) will be contrastively analyzed in order to identify specific thematic clusters and linguistic patterns. The comment data were fetched using hashtag-based selection criteria (via Python and the YT-API), where climate-related hashtag equivalents were present in the three languages of analysis (e.g., #climatechange/#cambiamentoclimatico/#klimawandel). The objective of this contribution is to analyze superordinate eco-narratives (Stibbe, 2021, 2024) in the YouTube Shorts across the languages and the timeframe 2022-2025 in order to critically reflect on the multimodal potential of such video formats to promote eco-aware and sustainable practices in the realm of digital literacy.

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Abstract title: ***Opinion climates: frames of truth about climate change on Facebook amid misinformation, fact-checking and counterframing***

Author: **Giovanni Boccia Artieri, Stefano Brillì, Luca Serafini, Francesco Maria Parente,**

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In a context where social platforms are seen as infrastructures that allow institutions and users to spread both scientific truths and alternative narratives, this study investigates the formation of "opinion climates" on climate change on Facebook.

The epistemic authority and epistemic legitimation strategies enabled through social media platforms are the focus of our research. This contribution explores the role of ordinary users in the processes of truth construction and frame negotiation, analyzing reactions and discourses to content considered controversial by Italian fact-checkers.

First, we identified 107 fact-checking articles about climate-related misinformation published by major Italian fact-checkers. Through CrowdTangle, we then collected 4,907 related public Facebook posts published by various types of pages – civic groups, content creators, grassroots information accounts, official media accounts –, between October 2021–October 2022), a time-sensitive period marked by high media salience of climate events and post-pandemic misinformation. A sub-sample of 254 posts with at least 40 comments was qualitatively analyzed to identify 1) framing and counter-framing strategies of climate-related news, 2) which kind of epistemic authority is attributed or implied in the post and in the comments.

Overall, the circulation of potentially controversial climate change news on Facebook shows a prevalence of opinions aligned with scientific framings. "Counter-fact-checking" practices appear marginal but present; the construction of an alternative epistemic authority is strongly tied to processes of the personalization of science, both through the delegitimization of official experts and activists and the reliance on figures portrayed as "rejected scientists".

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Abstract title: ***Environmental Frames Across Languages: English and Spanish Media Discourse on Extreme Weather Events in California***

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This paper presents a preliminary case study on how sustainability and environmental issues are discursively constructed and represented within the multilingual and multicultural context of California — a region tragically prone to recurring natural disasters such as wildfires, droughts, floods, and extreme climatic events. Combining the tools of Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (Partington, 2004) with ecolinguistics (Stibbe, 2021), the study examines how local and global media have addressed environmental challenges in California over the past decade (2015-2025). In particular, it first builds and analyses two corpora of newspaper texts in English and Spanish including comparable articles from major local outlets like the *Los Angeles Times* (English) and *La Opinión* (Spanish). These are then compared to purposely built reference corpora of texts from global outlets reporting on the same events such as *The Guardian* (English) and *El País* (Spanish). The examination relies on *Sketch Engine* and *Wmatrix* to identify and compare recurrent keywords, expressions, and semantic domains used to discuss sustainability, climate breakdown, and associated environmental challenges in California. Referring to Stibbe’s understanding of frames and framing, the analysis aims to investigate how linguistic diversity and cultural worldviews may influence lexical choices, framing strategies, and metaphorical expressions that could affect the comprehension and representation of these issues (Newman et al., 2018). By addressing the cognitive implications of environmental frames (Lakoff, 2010), this paper discusses the potential role of conceptual differences in hindering the pursuit of a shared vision for transformative environmental change grounded in ecologically sustainable ways of thinking and communicating.

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Abstract title: ***Dear 2045: Climate Change Discourse through Sound Reuse on TikTok***

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Recent studies have highlighted TikTok as an emerging site for climate and environmental discourse (Hautea *et al.*, 2021). While previous research in this field has predominantly examined content organised through the hashtag affordance, little attention has been devoted to sound reuse, a defining feature of the platform that makes the soundtracks from users’ videos available to others and provides editing tools to recontextualise them in new video performances (Jones, 2023; Abidin & Kaye, 2021). Addressing this gap, the present study investigates how sound reuse contributes to the discursive construction of environmental responsibility, affect and agency through the case of creative video performances based on the song “Dear 2045”, which currently counts over 130,000 posts<sup>1</sup>.

Adopting the framework of Social Media Discourse Studies (KhosraviNik, 2017), the study integrates linguistic and multimodal discourse analysis (Machin & Mayr, 2012) to examine four representative videos employing this sound. It combines linguistic analysis of the song lyrics and users’ comments with a multimodal analysis of the video format. The methodology involves using Sketch Engine for linguistic analysis and ATLAS.ti for the application of multimodal codes. Ultimately, the study explores how TikTok’s affordance of sound reuse shapes the circulation, affective framing and collective negotiation of climate discourse, contributing to broader discussions on how environmental futures are imagined and contested through digital discourse practices.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.tiktok.com/music/Dear-2045-6762991359373675269>

Abstract title: *Navigating Semiotic Ecosystems: The Perils and Protocols of Multimodal Crisis Communication*

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In an era of interconnected global crises, where coordinated action depends on shared understanding, the catastrophic failure of cross-cultural communication represents a critical vulnerability. This article challenges the prevailing assumption of multimodality as a universal visual language. Instead, it posits that communication is fundamentally ecological, operating within culturally specific semiotic ecosystems—dynamic environments governed by distinct, often unspoken, interpretive protocols. Building upon the triadic model of the sign from Peircean semiotics (iconic, indexical, and symbolic modalities) and integrating core principles from pragmatic theory concerning context and use, this analysis introduces a novel theoretical framework for diagnosing communication failure.

The proposed model advances a new approach by synthesizing these foundations to delineate a precise architecture of meaning. It conceptualizes every multimodal message as an internal system of three interacting modalities: the Iconic (the "how," or imagistic layer), the Indexical/Symbolic (the "what," or denotative layer), and the Pragmatic (the "where/why," or contextual framing). Their harmonious alignment creates semiotic synergy. However, the article's central theoretical contribution lies in its analysis of cross-ecosystem dynamics. It introduces the concept of semiotic asymmetry to describe the inherent divergence between interpretive logics, and the resultant *process of semiotic hijacking*—where a message's internal synergy is disassembled and its components weaponized to forge an oppositional meaning within a foreign ecosystem. Consequently, the article argues for a paradigm shift from tactical message design to strategic semiotic stewardship, requiring the diagnostic mapping of target ecosystems and the co-creative construction of meaning to navigate the perilous and often adversarial landscapes of global crisis communication.

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Abstract title: ***Multimodal Framing of Climate Change on Activist Groups' Social Media Pages: A Contrastive Perspective***

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Despite overwhelming scientific consensus over climate change's anthropogenic causes and impact, global governmental actions to mitigate its effects have so far been scarce (IPCC 2021). As a result of this inaction, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and activist movements have increased their cross-national cooperation, playing a critical role in raising awareness, mobilising the public and shaping the political discourse of elites through their protest activities (Van Dijk 2024), exploiting both offline (Fisher 2019) and online affordances. Moreover, advances in digital technologies have offered climate activist movements a wide range of platforms and tools to promote their message.

Combining a cognitive linguistic perspective drawing on multimodal metaphor (Forceville 2016; Dancygier 2023) and multimodal critical discourse analysis (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006; Ledin and Machin 2020), this paper compares the multimodal framing of climate change on the international and the Italian Instagram pages of three different activist movements, namely *Extinction Rebellion*, *Fridays for Future* and *Green Peace* in the time frame between November 2024 and November 2025. Applying the macro protest frames conceptualised by Benford and Snow (2000) to the domain of images, our analysis reveals that while relying on different semiotic devices and styles, most activists' posts focus primarily on diagnostic and mobilising frames rather than on proposing possible solutions. Furthermore, some of the NGOs analysed display a broad idea of activism on their social media that goes beyond mere climate-raising awareness posts to include famine and the current wars at stake worldwide.

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Abstract title: *Political Iconoclasm: How Media Narratives Shape the Meaning of Climate Activism*

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This study undertakes a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of both news articles and Twitter posts that address the climate protests against artworks by targeting famous masterpieces to gain media attention and raise awareness for climate change, like the protest held on October 14th, 2022, during which activists threw tomato soup onto Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* at the National Gallery in London. The objective is to explore how media logic and the socio-cultural dimensions of iconoclastic protest influence the construction of media narratives surrounding the event.

The research is guided by three key questions:

- RQ1: In what ways are news values foregrounded in the coverage of the tomato soup protest across journalistic and social media platforms?
- RQ2: How does media logic contribute to shaping public interpretations of the climate protest?
- RQ3: How do symbolic associations with culturally revered artworks and environmental concerns inform the discursive framing of the protest in both news outlets and tweets?

The corpus includes tweets and news articles, analyzed through the CDA frameworks of Van Dijk (2014) and Fairclough (1995), alongside theoretical concepts such as mediatization, media logic, iconoclasm, affiliation (as conceptualized by Stoler 2022), and news values.

Findings indicate that the protest garnered substantial media attention primarily due to its iconoclastic nature. Moreover, media logic appears to have played a role in transforming the event into a sensational narrative, often sidelining the underlying climate-related message. Finally, the discourses across platforms can be interpreted through the lens of affiliation, offering deeper insight into how the protest was represented and received.

Abstract title: *The preservation of the environment in Brazil through the demarcation of Indigenous Lands: a study of the discourse against the "Marco Temporal" (Time Limit) argument*

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Affiliation: University of São Paulo

This study aims to analyze two texts—one in favor and one against the "Marco Temporal" thesis—to highlight the importance of demarcating Indigenous Lands and preventing their continuous exploitation for the benefit of agribusiness and other activities that contribute to deforestation and climate change. The "Marco Temporal" (Time-Limit Framework) proposal seeks to complicate the demarcation of Indigenous Lands by limiting title recognition only to lands demonstrably occupied by Indigenous peoples at the time the 1988 Federal Constitution was enacted. The "Marco Temporal" remains under intense debate in the National Congress with back-and-forth movements, posing an ongoing threat to the demarcation process. The methodology involves a comparative analysis of the two opposing texts

on the "Marco Temporal." The objective is to employ Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and argumentation theory to expose the rhetorical resources utilized by each side to defend its position. Specifically, the analysis seeks to identify passages that demonstrate the connection between Indigenous peoples and the environment and illustrate how the preservation of their lands contributes to a more sustainable country with fewer extreme weather events. The justification for this study lies in the critical importance of understanding the topic of climate change on the planet. This research draws on the works of Teun Van Dijk (1999, 2012) on ideology and context, the discourse theories of Norman Fairclough (2004), and the theory of argumentation by Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca (2005), in addition to studies on Indigenous peoples in Brazil.

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Abstract title: ***Counterframing Arson and Wildfires: Ecomafie, Antimafia and Spatialisation in Climate Discourses on Southern Italy***

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This paper offers a critical framing analysis of climate discourse on criminal wildfires (incendi boschivi dolosi) in Sicily and Calabria, where *ecomafie*, like *Cosa Nostra* and *'Ndrangheta*, exploit ecological crises for territorial and economic gain. Theoretically, the study draws on frame semantics (Marmo, 2017), Lakoff's moral-political framing of climate change (Lakoff, 2010, 2019), war metaphors in (non-intentional) wildfires (Marghetis & Matlock, 2025) and spatialisation in criminal geography (Pearson, 2025). Fire is framed not only as an environmental disaster but as a deliberate instrument of intimidation and spatial control, disrupting legal land use, undermining cooperative ownership, and asserting dominance over contested terrain.

Methodologically, we contribute to Italian FrameNet by Copilot-driven analysis (Torrent et al., 2023) of event construal (Hart, 2024) based on the Berkeley FrameNet metalanguage (Boas et al., 2024), with special attention to the Crime\_Scenario frame. Italian newspaper articles *Tp24.com*, *La Via Libera*, *La Stampa* are annotated for core frame

elements (perpetrator, arson, cause, instrument, goal, affected territory) and non-core aspects of intimidation (place, manner).

The findings reveal arson as a strategic tool for spatial control, enabling access to subsidies, social intimidation, and speculation on clean-energy infrastructure. Empowered victims, such as activist civic antimafia cooperatives, are framed as counterforces reclaiming space through resistance and public denunciation. The Italian data suggest new lexical units (intimidation through spatial control, climate obstruction) and highlight the absent agentive role of proactive state intervention. Understanding *incendi boschivi dolosi* as both a criminal and climate crisis is essential for integrating counterhegemonic discourse, education and policy response.

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Abstract title: ***Reframing Security and Defense: The case of “Green Military”***

Author: **Dimitrios Mitres Sioupis, Athina Sioupi**

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With the end of the Cold War, concepts of climate and human security are becoming a prominent issue by Green parties in Central and Western Europe (Nugee et al. 2024; Verdebout & Nguyen 2024). As Lakoff (2010: 76) points out, “we are suffering from massive hypocognition in the case of the environment, [...] the environment [...] is intimately tied up with other issue areas: economics, energy, food, health, trade, and security [...]” (Caimotto, 2024).

This talk aims to explore the historical shift in Germany’s foreign and security policy that has signaled increased investment in national security since the *Zeitenwende* (February 27, 2022), by analysing official speeches by the German Federal Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Vice-Chancellor Robert Habeck, representative of the Green Party (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen), from 2022 through 2025. The analysis attempts to explore the following questions: is the framing of “Green Military” explicitly reported? Does the term ‘hybridity’ (hybrid warfare, attacks, threats etc.) pertain to militaristic connotation (Verdebout & Nguyen, 2024: 29)? To what extent do the official speeches reflect a discursive shift? Within the framework of Securitization theory (Buzan et al. 1993), which conceptualizes security as a speech act (Färber 2018), the study aims to: (a) investigate how is the language of security and defense during *Zeitenwende* articulated, (b) analyze at which concepts

the climate change as a security issue is foregrounded discursively, offering a case study to identify empirically the concept of security, defense and “Green Military” in the discursive frame of the *Zeitenwende*.

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## Panel 6: Education, Pedagogy & Climate Literacy

Abstract title: *Fostering sustainability or rebranding business-as-usual: critical language awareness in entrepreneurship education*

Author: **Matt Drury, Erika Darics, Janina Wildfeuer, Marianna Markantoni**

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Entrepreneurship education has become a strategic site for promoting sustainable and responsible mindsets, but it is not clear whether programmes that advocate future-oriented or responsible entrepreneurship actually deliver on this promise. Analyses of entrepreneurship curricula and textbooks suggest the opposite: materials present a predominantly instrumental view of entrepreneurship and rarely, if ever, address personal responsibility, ethics, or agency (Roundy & Asllani 2019; Tiberius et al. 2023). The problem is that educational materials do not simply describe entrepreneurial reality; they construct it. Words and images introduce students to ideologies, norms and values that shape how they understand entrepreneurship as ethical practice (Darics et al., 2025). We argue that educators and students need Critical Language and Multimodal Awareness (CLMA), a capacity to recognise the crucial role educational and entrepreneurial discourse plays in shaping how sustainability, justice and responsibility are framed.

This presentation shows a comparative discourse analysis of entrepreneurship course materials. The work forms part of the five-year project Critical Language and Multimodal Awareness: Key Competence for Future-Oriented Graduates (CLAMAC), which develops methodologies for cultivating critical awareness in business education. We analyse

pedagogical materials and institutional communication to identify the discourses through which entrepreneurship is constructed in the classroom. Taking Critical Language Awareness as the conceptual approach we illustrate how language and multimodal discourse shapes (and potentially limits) educators' and students' capacity for transformative change. We also demonstrate how CLMA pedagogy, as a framework for transformation, enables students to *notice*, *reflect on* and *reframe* problematic taken-for-granted assumptions in ways that support real future-oriented entrepreneurial practice - a competency urgently needed in an increasingly volatile, uncertain, and rapidly changing world.

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Abstract title: ***Frames of Responsibility: Climate Fiction, Energy Literacy, and Discursive Agency in Sustainability Education***

Author: **Daniel Lewis Wuebben**

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This paper examines how assessment design in higher education shapes students' climate discourse and sense of responsibility through the integration of climate fiction (Schneider-Mayerson et al., 2020; Van Beek & Versteeg, 2023), energy literacy, and multimodal writing. Drawing on mixed methods research from three distinct undergraduate courses in sustainability and academic writing (n= approximately 140), the study explores how creative and analytical composition can cultivate critical climate literacy and more expansive frames of responsibility.

Using frame analysis (Nisbet, 2009) and a critical–discourse lens (Cummings et al., 2020), the paper investigates: (1) which frames of climate responsibility and justice emerge from assignments blending storytelling and research; (2) how linguistic and multimodal cues (metaphors, narrative perspective, visual framing) invite or constrain climate agency (León et al., 2021).

Preliminary findings from identify three general frames for students' perceptions: technocratic optimization (solutions framed as innovation and efficiency), ethical stewardship (duty, care, and intergenerational justice), and civic contention (collective action and power). This suggests that assignments need to better merge creative climate fiction with evidence-based analysis. These kinds of interventions can help students move beyond optimization and stewardship toward civic contention, or from framing sustainability as a purely technical or economic challenge to one which is a more participatory, justice-oriented practice that can expand students' climate consciousness.

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Abstract title: ***Performing Climate Action: From Moral Imperatives to Collective Agency in English Children's Media***

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Adult-oriented climate discourse is often constrained by moralising and guilt-driven narratives that hinder collective action. By contrast, English-language narratives for young audiences provide a distinct discursive space where sustainability is performed through inclusive, playful, and affective practices. This paper investigates how climate activism is linguistically and multimodally recontextualised in a range of contemporary children's media, including animated series (e.g. *Peppa Pig: Recycling*, *Octonauts: Above & Beyond*, *Go Jetters*) and selected picturebooks (e.g. *Greta and the Giants*, *What a Waste*, *Old Enough to Save the Planet*).

Drawing on performativity theory (Austin, 1962; Butler, 1990, 1997; Pennycook, 2007) and ecolinguistics (Stibbe, 2021), the study analyses how imperatives, inclusive pronouns, stance-taking, repetition, and multimodal cues (image–text relations, gesture, rhythm, sound design) enact participation and mutual responsibility. Methodologically, it combines performative discourse analysis with multimodal analysis (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021) on a purposive corpus of English children's media. Close readings are complemented by corpus-assisted searches for key performative features (e.g. imperatives, first-person plural, stance markers) across transcripts and paratexts.

The paper argues that these texts translate protest into everyday, relational practices without evacuating agency. By reframing climate action as collaborative and achievable rather than moralistic or guilt-inducing, children's narratives enact a pedagogy of participation. This performative model of ecological agency offers valuable insights for reimagining intergenerational climate communication and discourse-based sustainability education.

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Abstract title: ***EcoAI Literacies: Framing Ecoliteracy and Artificial Intelligence in Civic Education Discourse***

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This paper presents the results of an exploratory survey conducted in 2024 among to 398 upper-secondary students in Campania (ages 14–19). The study examines how young people articulate their understanding of sustainability, artificial intelligence, and civic responsibility through the discursive configurations that emerge in educational contexts.

Rooted in the theoretical perspective of Ecodigital Posthumanism (Rubino, 2025), the research explores how ecological and digital literacies intertwine to form new modes of subjectivity and civic awareness in the post-digital era. Drawing on the conceptual integration between ecoliteracy (Orr, 1992; Capra, 1996) and AI literacy (Ng et al., 2021; Long & Magerko, 2020), the analysis investigates the ways in which students position themselves within the techno-ecological narratives that dominate contemporary education.

The instrument included ten Likert-scale items covering civic engagement, environmental concern, and perceptions of AI in education. Cluster analysis identified three distinct eco-civic profiles: An eco-responsible pragmatist profile ( $\approx 41\%$ ) links ethical awareness, sustainability, and digital competence, expressing balanced confidence in AI. A techno-optimist learner profile ( $\approx 35\%$ ) displays strong trust in technology as a driver of ecological progress but weaker civic reflexivity. A disengaged observer profile ( $\approx 24\%$ ) shows low engagement with both digital and environmental issues.

These configurations, mapped within the Eco-Civic Index, reveal how values, literacies, and digital agency intersect in constructing ecological consciousness. EcoAI Literacies emerge as cognitive and affective infrastructures shaping civic agency and ecological consciousness, positioning civic education as a site of negotiation where digital mediation and environmental awareness.

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Abstract title: ***Defining Environmental Awareness: Conceptual Ambiguities and Practical Implications for Climate Communication***

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Environmental awareness is widely regarded as a cornerstone of sustainability education and a key antecedent of pro-environmental behaviour (Kaiser & Shimoda, 1999). Yet, despite its intuitive appeal, the concept remains theoretically fragmented and operationally inconsistent. In environmental psychology, awareness is often equated with knowledge or attitudes toward ecological issues (Ham et al., 2016), whereas consciousness research frames it as a lived, experiential process involving meta-awareness of internal states and behavioural patterns (Farrell & McClelland, 2017). These divergent interpretations complicate measurement and intervention design.

To address this issue, we adopt a comparative, interdisciplinary approach using a discourse-analytic review of approximately 100 peer-reviewed articles published between 2010 and 2025, retrieved via a Scopus search using the keywords ‘awareness’ AND ‘pro-environmental behaviour’. The corpus was examined to map definitional patterns, operationalisations, and their implications for intervention design. Most studies conceptualise awareness in cognitive–evaluative terms, such as (i) environmental knowledge, (ii) environmental attitudes, or (iii) recognition of personal responsibility. However, emerging work integrates experiential and reflective dimensions, aligning with mindfulness research (Fischer et al., 2017). Here, awareness includes (i) experiential attunement to nature and (ii) meta-awareness enabling recognition of habitual patterns and affective responses.

We argue that definitional ambiguity is not merely a semantic issue but has practical consequences. Narrow cognitive framings overlook automatic habits and emotional dynamics that sustain unsustainable routines (Verplanken & Orbell, 2019; Brosch & Steg, 2021). Expanding the concept of environmental awareness to include experiential and reflective dimensions, such as those found in mindfulness research, allows these challenges to be addressed more effectively. We therefore propose an integrative definition of environmental awareness encompassing (i) recognition of internal bodily and emotional states in relation to the environment, (ii) experiential engagement with the natural world, and (iii) reflective/meta-awareness that supports monitoring and deliberate action. This broader construct clarifies why awareness does not consistently lead to action and provides a foundation for designing communication and education strategies that address habits, attentional processes, emotional dynamics, and identity as key factors in closing the well-documented attitude–behaviour gap (Kollmuss & Aygeman, 2002).

Abstract title: *Discourse analysis, experiential learning, authentic assessment: three perspectives in search of a triologue?*

Author: **Valeria Tolis**

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Discourse analysis can be an opaque methodology for students with no background in language-based studies. Yet, combined with experiential learning (Gusc & van Veen-Dirks 2017; Kioupi et al. 2021) and the idea of “authentic assessment” (Villarroel et al., 2018), it can become a pedagogical ally towards sustainability (Bielefeldt, 2013).

This paper discusses how teaching about the socio-political dimension of climate change can benefit from a “discursive” turn in non-languages-based degrees, with examples provided by a selection of UG and PGT Sustainability Programmes at the School of Earth and Environment at the University of Leeds. To accomplish this, the paper first discusses the implementation of a UG five-day fieldtrip to Glasgow (Tolis 2025), during which students collected data from different stakeholders, against the background of the Scottish climate policymaking and with a focus on different themes, i.e. climate and energy justice. The paper then compares this experience with a classroom-based simulation of the UNFCCC COPs in which students reflected on their negotiation strategies, power dynamics and the “object” of negotiation. The paper finally reflects if and how “discourse analysis” helps achieve a greater level of criticality and reflexivity than other qualitative methods.

This paper is divided in three parts. The first section discusses experiential learning and its role in assessing more “authentically”. The second part delves into the aims and purposes of the experiential learning activities (fieldtrip and mock conference). The third part discusses strengths and weaknesses of a “discursive” turn in pedagogical settings considering experiential learning objectives and outcomes in the field of sustainability.

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## Panel 7: Multimodality, Semiotics & Meaning-Making

Abstract title: *Telling time, reading sustainable futures: where linguistics meets anthropology in the discursive construction of climate change*

Author: **Cinzia Bevitori, Jane Helen Johnson**

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Climate change is increasingly understood as a “wicked” and multidimensional problem that demands attention not only to science and policy but also to the cultural and communicative dimensions through which climate and sustainability are imagined (Hulme, 2022; Dryzek et al., 2011). Central to this perspective is the notion of *climate imaginaries*; i.e., collectively shared narratives that shape how societies envision, evaluate, and act upon possible futures (Taylor, 2004; Appadurai, 2013; Hulme, 2022).

This study pursues a twofold aim. Theoretically, it draws on recent anthropological and sociological work on *temporality* and *climate imaginaries* (Bryant & Knight, 2019; Jasanoff & Kim, 2015; Milkoreit, 2017) to examine how discourses of sustainability and futurity are linguistically constructed in climate change non-fiction (Bevitori & Johnson, forthcoming). Methodologically, it integrates corpus-assisted discourse studies (Baker, 2023) with AI-supported semantic analysis, employing large language models as interpretive “inter-raters” to identify and trace how different kinds of futures are made imaginable, desirable, possible, or inevitable through discourse across a diachronic corpus.

By combining ethnographically informed theory with computational tools, the study advances understanding of how language constructs climate temporality, how AI can enhance interpretive rigour, and how narratives shape collective orientations toward sustainability and planetary futures. The findings illuminate the discursive practices through which societies imagine futures, offering a model for combining qualitative and computational approaches to the study of climate change and sustainability and thus paving the way for transformational change.

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Abstract title: *Green pragmatics: a narrative review of pragmatic tools in climate change communication*

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Climate change (CC) is a globally prominent topic, yet its communication still poses several challenges. Here, we offer the first comprehensive review (>100 studies from 1990 to 2025) on green pragmatic tools used in CC communication. A vast literature elucidated the diverse source domains used to conceptualize CC-related phenomena, highlighting each metaphor's implications, from WAR expressing urgency to fight CC (Atanasova & Koteyko, 2017), to JOURNEY proposing routes towards greener futures (Atanasova, 2019). A few experimental studies showed metaphor's effects in promoting pro-environmental behaviors (Flusberg et al., 2017; Pompei et al., 2024), particularly when human agency balances fear and urgency to avoid CC doomism (Johnstone & Stickles, 2024).

Recent studies revealed how CC messages often combine verbo-visual aspects multimodally, creatively blending metaphor and metonymy into metaphonymy to prompt concrete action (O'Dowd, 2024). Other aspects are key, such as humorous components of memes and satire, social critiques that strengthen CC beliefs (Becker & Anderson, 2019) but are significantly influenced by demographic and affective dimensions (Skurka & Lee Cunningham, 2023). Moreover, studies on discourse strategies of different actors across genres, from corporate (Dahl & Fløttum, 2019) to institutional EU discourse (Russo & Bevitori, 2024), foreground how all linguistic levels, from micro (e.g., personal pronouns) to macro (e.g., the net-zero hero narrative) contribute to shaping CC stances.

By comprehensively describing how CC communication employs pragmatic tools, this work emphasizes their pros and cons, with particular emphasis on dimensions of individual variability, evaluating the impact of CC discourse on people's beliefs, thoughts, and actions.

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Abstract title: ***Shifting the narrative: climate storytelling by “Open Planet”. An Ecolinguistic and Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis***

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Language shapes our cognition, social interactions, and understanding of the environment. It can have a negative influence on our relationship with nature, leading to degradation, but it also holds the potential to foster ecological awareness and inspire action. Misinformation, inconsistent communication, and cognitive biases can hinder public understanding of climate change, making the development of effective communication strategies to convey urgency critical (Gherheş et al. 2025; Penz 2018).

With that in mind, this study examines how “Open Planet,” a global, free library of high-quality climate and nature footage for storytelling, fosters environmental literacy. The visual library displayed on its website aims to inspire action on environmental issues by offering accessible, evidence-based content for educators, activists, and creators. Stibbe (2024) called for a necessary move from sheer narratives – i.e. “how we understand the world, or rather ‘our world’” (2024, p. 14) – to “econarratives”, which are narratives focusing on the interaction among humans, other species and the physical environment. These narratives need to be applied in practical forms of communication, such as political speeches and media, to move beyond abstract academic discussions.

By intersecting Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021) and Ecolinguistics (Stibbe, 2017, 2018), this paper demonstrates the educational potential of “Open Planet” and highlights the features of selected campaigns, along with valuable suggestions for delivering effective educational storytelling. The ultimate aim is to shed light on the power of languaging to challenge dominant, destructive narratives associated with “growthism” (Halliday, 2001), while raising bioecological awareness and fostering more empathy between humans and the natural world (Steffensen, Döring, & Cowley, 2024).

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Abstract title: ***Temporal imaginaries in discourses on eco-citizenship***

Author: **Thomas Jacobs, Kelly Céleste Vossen**

Affiliation: UCLouvain

This contribution explores how young people’s environmental citizenship is discursively constructed, negotiated, and sometimes foreclosed within marginalised and activist youth collectives in Belgium. Drawing on a participatory ethnography and discourse analysis in both local participatory “*Jeunes Vertes*” frameworks and *Activist* movements, the research mobilises the Essex school’s ontological approach (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985) to examine temporal imaginaries (Edensor et al., 2020; de Moor & Marquardt, 2023; Denis 2025). The study identifies how activist collectives saturate citizenship discourse with climate urgency, constructing the present as a site of crisis that legitimises immediate mobilisation and collective responsibility. In contrast, marginalised youth in participatory settings articulate temporalities marked by suspended agency, resource constraints and deferred commitment, while projecting more gradual, collective futures. Across both contexts, discursive strategies of politicisation and depoliticisation entangle imaginaries revealing persistent tensions between neoliberal constraints, social inequalities, and the aspiration for transformative agency. The results suggest that the performative negotiation of temporalities shapes not only what counts as political action but also the conditions under which environmental citizenship can become genuinely inclusive and operative. Thus, this contribution critically engages with the discursive limits and possibilities for climate-related civic agency among youth, highlighting the challenges and potentialities of activating new imaginaries in the face of endemic barriers and structural inequalities.

### **Panel 8: Ideology, Identity & Climate Subjectivities**

Abstract title: ***Climate change discourse. Or, why truth is discursive, too Communication***

Author: **Johannes Angermüller**

Affiliation: The Open University

What difference does it make for a discourse to turn out true or false? This question has become of pressing relevance in ongoing political struggles. The climate controversy is a case in point where well-established scientific knowledge has met

with vocal criticism. In this situation, it seems curious that mainstream discourse researchers keep claiming that the truth quality of discourse is outside their concerns. In this talk, I want to make the case for a radically discursive approach that acknowledges the hierarchy between true and untrue discourses while asking how both truths and untruths are constructed discursively. My empirical discussion is based on the controversies over human-driven changes of the atmosphere, from the depletion of the ozone layer in the 1970s and 1980s to the acid rain panic in Germany of the 1980s and climate science since the 2010s. My examples testify to the complex and sometimes surprising dynamics of discourse as a result of which the truth of certain claims is established or not. Inspired by Science and Technologies Studies, my approach defends both the epistemic and social value of discourses and articulates linguistic, social and material dimensions. Against this theoretical background, the controversies over global gas emissions remind us that discourses do not become true simply because many people say or think they are true. Instead, discourse researchers would do well to acknowledge that some discourses are truer than others when they articulate material and non-material elements in ways that stand the test of time.

Abstract title: *L'ennemi écologique: continuités discursives dans la construction du danger*

Author: **Majdi Chaouachi**

Affiliation: Université de Jendouba Tunisie

Cette communication analyse la manière dont le discours occidental construit, au fil des époques, des figures successives de l'« ennemi » selon les contextes historiques, politiques et médiatiques. Comme l'a formulé Umberto Eco, « l'histoire de l'humanité est une succession de visages que nous avons donnés à nos ennemis ». Dans cette perspective, l'étude montre que chaque période façonne un danger collectif destiné à orienter, justifier et légitimer certaines pratiques sociales et politiques. Après l'ennemi communiste de la guerre froide, la menace terroriste des années 2000 et le danger sanitaire incarné par la pandémie de la COVID-19, un nouvel adversaire s'impose désormais dans les discours publics : la pollution et les déséquilibres environnementaux. Cette continuité s'inscrit dans une logique discursive où la peur structure la production du sens, mobilise les acteurs sociaux et hiérarchise les priorités. On observe ainsi des récurrences lexicales, argumentatives et modales qui renforcent la représentation d'un péril imminent. La méthodologie adoptée repose sur une analyse sémantico-lexicale visant à examiner les termes, expressions et chaînes lexicales participant à la construction discursive de l'ennemi. L'étude s'appuie sur un corpus de 52 coupures composé de textes journalistiques et de discours politiques liés à la question écologique, afin de mettre en évidence les procédés lexicaux qui contribuent à l'émergence de cet « ennemi écologique ».

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Abstract title: ***Common Sense in Climate Change Crisis Discourse: Environmental Disasters in News, Political and Public Discourse***

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Recent scholarship shows that appeals to “common sense” and “normality” have played a key role in the discursive shift toward the far right during a decade marked by polycrises (Wodak 2024). Building on prior work on common-sense reasoning in crisis communication (Vaara and Whittle 2021; Krzyżanowski 2020; Krzyżanowski et al. 2023; Bevitori and Russo 2025), this research investigates how such appeals function in environmental and climate-change discourse. In political and news communication on environmental disasters, common sense is frequently used to legitimize action, simplify complexity, and generate consent against a shared threat. Yet these appeals often yield reductive narratives—from hasty generalizations to catastrophic predictions—that may foster fear, despair, and paralysis (Cap 2017; Russo 2019). In extreme cases, they contribute to climate conspiracy theories or retrotopian imaginaries such as ecofascism (Forchtner 2019).

Institutional and policy discourse further naturalizes ideological assumptions that solidify into climate-change “common sense” (Fairclough 1989). Narratives emphasizing development, resilience, adaptation, and sustainability often obscure the ideological underpinnings of climate governance, depoliticizing structural inequalities and reinforcing technocratic or managerial responses (Remling 2018). As a result, institutional discourse rarely challenges dominant *endoxa* of progress, growth, and responsibility.

This paper examines U.S. and Australian wildfire discourse from the past five years, both contexts that have embraced “common sense” bushfire management. Using a corpus-based critical discourse studies approach, it analyzes institutional and political communication alongside major news outlets (e.g., *Los Angeles Times*, ABC News Australia, *The Sydney Morning Herald*). The study traces interdiscursive links to identify frames of reasonableness, normality, and practicality that circulate across fields—often depoliticizing the climate crisis, though sometimes recast to support Indigenous environmental knowledge. Ultimately, it illuminates how hegemonic “climate common sense” is co-constructed and how counter-hegemonic narratives may guide more just, pluralistic climate responses.

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Abstract title: ***Constructing a Sceptical Self: Identity & Legitimation in Climate Sceptic Blogs***

Author: **Izabella Schleier**

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This presentation focuses on climate sceptic bloggers' construction of ingroup and outgroup identities and how their representation of the conflict between climate sceptics and mainstream climate science contributes to identity-driven resistance to scientific authority. Such resistance, as Bliuc et al. (2015) suggest, can be viewed as part of a socio-political conflict between opinion-based groups whose beliefs form a key part of their social identity and underpin collective efforts to promote or resist social change.

The analysis is grounded in the Discourse-Historical Approach (Wodak, 2015), attending to multiple layers of context, including intertextual and interdiscursive relations, the situational setting of blogs and the socio-political and historical context of the climate divide. Drawing on theories of identity construction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005) and legitimation (van Leeuwen, 2007; Reyes, 2011), I examine how climate sceptics legitimise their own stance – portraying themselves as aligned with core scientific principles such as critical inquiry and scepticism – while delegitimising mainstream climate science as politicised or dogmatic.

I analyse visual and textual representations on the About pages of four climate sceptic blogs, which serve as focal points for identity construction and inform the reader about the blog (Dennen, 2009; Andrusiak, 2018). These pages reveal how bloggers represent climate sceptics and scientists, narrate conflict with scientific authority and construct identities as either alternative experts or voices for ordinary people's experiences and common sense, reflecting broader populist critiques of science (Mede & Schäfer, 2020). The presentation contributes to understanding how digital media discourses shape identity-driven rejection of climate science.

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Abstract title: ***Discursive Construction of Legitimacy in Climate Politics***

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This contribution examines how political legitimacy in climate politics is discursively constructed rather than derived directly from scientific evidence or formal authority. Drawing on discourse theory (Foucault) and the sociology of knowledge (Berger and Luckmann), legitimacy is conceptualized as an outcome of interpretive power exercised within contested public arenas. The focus lies on the interaction between epistemic, moral, and political forms of legitimacy in contemporary climate discourse.

Empirically, the contribution analyzes a central discursive conflict in the German climate debate of 2025: the public confrontation between Chancellor Friedrich Merz and the climate movement Fridays for Future, triggered by a Bundestag speech in which the effectiveness of national climate neutrality was relativized. This episode is conceptualized as a discursive tipping point at which dominant interpretations of responsibility, rationality, and political agency were publicly renegotiated.

Analytically, the contribution shows that political actors mobilize utilitarian-economic frames to translate epistemic urgency into arguments of cost, efficiency, and national effectiveness. In contrast, civil society actors deploy moral-normative frames that link scientific consensus with ethical categories such as intergenerational justice and global responsibility. The central thesis argues that legitimacy in climate politics does not primarily emerge from scientific truth claims alone, but from the discursive capacity to integrate scientific evidence, moral reasoning, and media resonance.

Abstract title: ***"Make the Planet Green Again": A critical discourse analysis of right-wing populist climate communication***

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This research examines the ways right-wing populist leaders, Donald Trump (USA), Giorgia Meloni (Italy), and Viktor Orbán (Hungary), construct and disseminate narratives about climate change in their public messages. Building on Badiang Oloko's (2023) analysis of Donald Trump's global warming communication and on Wodak's (2021) study of far-right populist rhetoric, we expand the investigation across multiple political and cultural contexts, critically addressing how their communication adapts to distinct national and contextual environments. The sampling was based on a search for terms referring to climate change and related concepts (e.g., green, environment, sustainability) on each country's official Executive website, focusing on interviews, statements, and speeches. All materials containing the terms were collected, and after the initial screening, 10 texts per leader explicitly referencing the topic were randomly selected for the final analysis (N=30). We evaluated the content in their original languages (English, Italian, and Hungarian) to ensure analytical equivalence across cases, adopting Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) based on Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional framework: textual, discursive, and sociocultural. Textual analysis identifies lexical choices and semantic frames; discursive-practice examines communicative purposes and production contexts; and sociocultural analysis contextualizes these narratives within each leader's broader climate policy agenda. Preliminary findings suggest that climate-related discourse becomes a strategic site for asserting national sovereignty, delegitimizing global environmental governance, and justifying climate inaction or selective engagement. Therefore, this study contributes to understanding how contemporary populist actors instrumentalize climate communication to advance ideological and geopolitical goals.

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## Panel 9: Culture, Language & Environmental Worldviews

Abstract title: ***David and Goliath – how David resisted corporate power, reclaimed sustainability and social justice, and won***

Author: **Rita de Mendonça Freire Nogueira Faria**

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This study examines how a discourse of active resistance to corporate interests can promote social justice and sustainability, focusing on a recent legal case in Portugal opposing the *Movimento Cultural da Terra de Miranda* (MCTM), representing several northeastern municipalities, to the energy corporation EDP. In 2020, EDP sold six hydroelectric dams in the Douro basin to French consortium Engie through a complex operation that, EDP claimed, exempted it from taxation. This was publicly contested, especially by MCTM, whose municipalities would receive part of the tax revenue. Confronting governmental inaction, MCTM deployed discursive and legal strategies that culminated in the Public Prosecutor's Office ruling in November 2025 that EDP owed the Portuguese state 335 million euros in unpaid taxes.

Drawing on Van Dijk's (2006, 2024) cognitive approach to ideology and using critical discourse analysis, the study investigates the ideological polarisation of EDP's and MCTM's discourses. The data comprises three strands: (1) press coverage from 2020–2025, from which public statements by both EDP and MCTM are extracted, alongside key official documents (a statement from the Portuguese Environment Agency and a formal requirement to the Ministry of Finance by party *Bloco de Esquerda*); (2) EDP's statements on its website; and (3) MCTM's communiqués.

The analysis argues that EDP and MCTM construct opposing “stories” (Stibbe 2015). EDP advances a neoliberal ideology presenting the “transparent”, “banal” sale as the legitimate exercise of private property rights over hydric resources, whereas MCTM reframes these resources as collective and indispensable to the human and natural ecology of a neglected region. These polarised stories shape reality differently, with concomitant, tangible consequences for how the concepts of sustainability and social justice are perceived and enacted.

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Abstract title: ***Ecological Epistemology and Discourses of Linguistic Diversity: A Case Study of Breton Language Education***

Author: **Naoko Hosokawa**

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This paper examines recent shifts in discourses on minority languages through the lens of ecological epistemology, with particular attention to how these languages are taught, learned, and legitimised in educational settings. The UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages (2003, 6) notes that ecological knowledge is embedded in local languages. Similarly, Ludwig et al. (2021, 14) argue that “[h]uman knowledge about different human environments disappears along with linguistic diversity, putting the very biodiversity of these environments at risk of disappearing too”. Thus, to safeguard ecosystems, it is essential to protect linguistic and cultural diversity. On this basis, the study presents a case study of the Breton language, traditionally spoken in the western part of Brittany, France. Drawing on critical discourse analysis and informed by a folk-linguistic perspective, semi-structured interviews with speakers and non-speakers of Breton were analysed to illuminate how the language is discursively positioned and valued within the Breton community. The findings reveal that contemporary approaches to minority language education are moving beyond static, dichotomous models towards more relational and dynamic conceptions of linguistic diversity. This discursive transformation mirrors developments in ecological science, where binary models are increasingly replaced by paradigms emphasising interdependence and adaptive complexity. In light of ecological epistemology, the paper concludes that the sustainability of minority language education plays an indispensable role in wider efforts to strengthen ecological learning and teaching, and that its success depends on fostering discourses that recognise interconnectedness, hybridity, and dynamic linguistic identities.

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Abstract title: ***Local specificity and horizontal social complexity: Why globally dominant discourses always marginalize real sustainability***

Author: **Axel Utz**

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Discourses on sustainability continue to marginalize voices and therefore misdirect change. Thousands of small cultures around the world developed sustainable ways of life based on knowledge of high local specificity. Yet such "local" knowledge remains widely neglected in "global" discourses surrounding sustainability (Poole, 2023). The reason is simple: Local specificity produces huge horizontal complexity—more than global discourses can handle and appreciate. Therefore, even proponents of sustainability and sustainable "development" continue to sideline local knowledge (Jordan & Lubick, pp. 139-144).

My current research uses qualitative methods to analyze "local" discourses shaped by cultures that historically favored sustainable ways of life. This paper highlights the significance of relational values that permeated such discourses among O'odham, Nyakyusa, and neighbors at the beginning of colonial incursions. Discourses and values are accessible through various sources such as oral histories, early colonial records, and ethnographies. The paper provides concrete examples of how relational values transcended the human drive toward anthropocentric separation (Mylius, 2018, pp. 180-185) and the resulting fear of "nature" (Soga & Evans, pp. 926-927).

Some current advocates of surviving local knowledge and related practices try a selective approach. They may promote some agricultural techniques and discard aspects they consider inconvenient or irrelevant (Stein et al., 2021). My research supports the view that selective approaches may underestimate the significance of discarded aspects. Even some seemingly "superstitious" language and practices turn out to be crucial components of sustainable ways of life because they habitualized relational values that transcended anthropocentric separation.

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## Panel 10: AI, Data & Computational Approaches to Climate Discourse

Abstract title: ***AI's green paradox: The discursive politics of AI's environmental self-presentation***

Author: **Benjamin Glasson**

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The AI sector increasingly narrates its role in the climate transition as one of environmental stewardship, even as its own energy-intensive digital infrastructure drives significant emissions growth. For example, leading tech firms promote AI's potential for decarbonization while reporting unprecedented surges in data centre energy use and carbon emissions (Subin, 2025). This paper critically examines the sustainability discourse and green storytelling through which AI firms position themselves as climate solution providers (Guthman, 2024). Companies investigated are Amazon, Apple, Facebook, Google, Meta, Nvidia, and Tesla. It investigates how these companies use subject-positioning strategies to cast themselves as environmental stewards and innovators, while downplaying the carbon costs of their operations. A central focus is the contradiction between corporate climate narratives and actual energy profiles that remain largely fossil-fuelled and rapidly escalating (Milmo, 2024). Drawing on corporate sustainability reports, public media statements, industry keynotes, and emissions data, the study employs critical discourse analysis and subject positioning theory to empirically analyse how AI

companies construct and project their sustainability claims. The findings highlight how green storytelling in the AI sector serves to obscure issues of emissions accountability: optimistic climate promises are used to justify the industry's growing carbon footprint. By unpacking these discourse strategies and contradictions, the paper provides a critically engaged perspective on the politics of AI's sustainability discourse, offering insights relevant to environmental politics, environmental studies, and science and technology studies.

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Abstract title: ***Embedding Ecological Futures: Word Embeddings, Narrative Ethics, and the Potential of AI in Reframing Environmental Discourse***

Author: **Martina Russo, Jorge Vallego**

Affiliation: University of Bologna, TheH4rmonyProject.org

This paper investigates how AI-generated content and algorithmic systems shape environmental discourse through the latent semantic architecture of word embeddings, vectorial representations that define meaning within large language models (LLMs). Drawing on ecolinguistic frameworks (Stibbe, 2021, 2024) and recent interdisciplinary proposals for embedding ecological awareness into AI development (Vallego, 2023), we explore how these embeddings encode, reproduce, and potentially transform dominant ideologies and framings concerning ecology and sustainability.

We argue that understanding how LLMs produce meaning requires a lens that maps three linguistic concepts onto model components: componential analysis, which parallels how models learn semantic features during training (Katz & Fodor, 1963, Widyastuti, 2010); compositional semantics, which aligns with how attention mechanisms assemble context-sensitive meaning (Baroni, Bernardi, & Zamparelli, 2014; Vaswani et al., 2017); and distributional semantics, which guide next-token prediction through co-occurrence proximity (Firth, 1957; Mikolov et al., 2013). Together, these processes simulate a hybrid form of meaning-making, where ecological values can either be perpetuated or restructured.

Focusing on word embeddings as epistemological and discursive structures, we investigate in particular how they often encode proximity between ecological terms and exploitative economic logics (e.g., “nature” with “resource”) (Stibbe, 2015; Goatly, 2007). Through vector analysis of embedding spaces and next-token predictions across language models (contrasting base models against fine-tuned on the H4rmony dataset (Vallego, 2024), we assess how the reorientation of these embeddings could enable the emergence of ecocentric and sustainable narratives (Stibbe, 2024).

Grounded in an ecosophy that prioritises the wellbeing of all life forms and the necessity of systemic change (Naess, 1996; Stibbe, 2024), we propose an ecolinguistic-informed methodology, recalibrating word embeddings and narrative flow that promotes AI as a rhetorical partner in co-constructing ecological futures.

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1. [Amendolara, V.](#): *Doomscrolling while communicating the climate crisis: Thematic clusters and linguistic patterns in YT Shorts comment sections*
2. [Angermüller, J.](#): *Climate change discourse. Or, why truth is discursive, too*
3. [Bevitori, C.](#), & [Johnson, J.H.](#): *Telling time, reading sustainable futures: where linguistics meets anthropology in the discursive construction of climate change*
4. [Boccia Artieri, G.](#), [Brilli, S.](#), [Serafini, L.](#), & [Parente, F.M.](#): *Opinion climates: frames of truth about climate change on Facebook amid misinformation, fact-checking and counterframing*
5. [Bressler, M.](#), [Bischetti, L.](#), & [Bambini, V.](#): *Green pragmatics: a narrative review of pragmatic tools in climate change communication*
6. [Buonvivere, L.](#), & [Lamonaca, M.](#): *Environmental Frames Across Languages: English and Spanish Media Discourse on Extreme Weather Events in California*
7. [Causa, S.](#): *Dear 2045: Climate Change Discourse through Sound Reuse on TikTok*
8. [Chaouachi, M.](#): *L'ennemi écologique: continuités discursives dans la construction du danger*
9. [Chirac, M.](#): *Reconfiguring climate attention in Romanian television broadcasts: journalistic framing as a response to “green fatigue”*
10. [Del Gaudio, A.](#): *Appraising Corporate OPINION on EU Environmental Reporting Standards: Evaluative Language in Feedback and Public Consultations*
11. [Di Gregorio, G.](#): *From annual reports to social media: representational features of sustainability disclosure in aviation industry*
12. [Drury, M.](#), [Darics, E.](#), [Wildfeuer, J.](#), & [Markantoni, M.](#): *Fostering sustainability or rebranding business-as-usual: critical language awareness in entrepreneurship education*
13. [Faria, R.](#): *David and Goliath – how David resisted corporate power, reclaimed sustainability and social justice, and won.*
14. [Flores, W.](#): *Swiss Climate Policy Discourse in a Time of Crises A contrastive analysis of the debates surrounding the CO2-Act revision and the Climate and Innovation Act*
15. [Franck, T.](#): *The Discursive Construction of the Energy Transition in the French-speaking Press The Case of Le Soir (2022–2024)*

16. [Glasson, B.](#): *AI's green paradox: The discursive politics of AI's environmental self-presentation*
17. [Gurevich, L.](#): *Navigating Semiotic Ecosystems: The Perils and Protocols of Multimodal Crisis Communication*
18. [Horsbol, A., & Eskjær, M.](#): *Localizing CCUS: Discourses of Emerging Energy Technologies Between Risk and Opportunity*
19. [Hosokawa, N.](#): *Ecological Epistemology and Discourses of Linguistic Diversity: A Case Study of Breton Language Education*
20. [Intorcchia, E.](#): *Shifting the narrative: climate storytelling by "Open Planet". An Ecolinguistic and Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis*
21. [Jacobs, T.](#), & [Vossen, K.C.](#): *Temporal imaginaries in discourses on eco-citizenship*
22. [Lazar, I.I.](#): *Discursive Framing in the Communication Strategies of Romanian Local Councillors in Italy*
23. [Lupano, E.](#), & [Scaringella, F.](#): *Framing Renewables in Chinese Public Discourse: Analysis of Five Case Studies of Energy Community*
24. [Jovanovic Padejski, D.](#): *Environmental Framing Across Political Systems: Discourse and Evaluation in U.S./British and Russian Independent News Media*
25. [Lewis Wuebben, D.](#): *Frames of Responsibility: Climate Fiction, Energy Literacy, and Discursive Agency in Sustainability Education*
26. [Lorenzetti, M.I.](#): *Multimodal Framing of Climate Change on Activist Groups' Social Media Pages: A Contrastive Perspective*
27. [Magazzù, G.](#): *Political Iconoclasm: How Media Narratives Shape the Meaning of Climate Activism*
28. [Meledandri, E.](#), & [Falco, G.](#): *Does Pollyanna rhetoric really conceal corporate transparency? A multimodal analysis of Sustainable Reports*
29. [Molek-Kozakowska, K.](#): *Discursive strategies of making environmental sustainability issues newsworthy (again)*
30. [Moreira Pedro, A.](#): *The preservation of the environment in Brazil through the demarcation of Indigenous Lands: a study of the discourse against the "Marco Temporal" (Time Limit) argument*
31. [Natale, A.](#): *Performing Climate Action: From Moral Imperatives to Collective Agency in English Children's Media*
32. [Radut-Gaghi, L.](#): *Epistemic communities, climate and COPs*
33. [Rubino, G.](#): *EcoAI Literacies: Framing Ecoliteracy and Artificial Intelligence in Civic Education Discourse*

34. [Russo, K.E.](#): *Common Sense in Climate Change Crisis Discourse: Environmental Disasters in News, Political and Public Discourse*
35. [Russo, M.](#), & [Vallego, J.](#): *Embedding Ecological Futures: Word Embeddings, Narrative Ethics, and the Potential of AI in Reframing Environmental Discourse*
36. [Sambre, P.](#): *Counterframing Arson and Wildfires: Ecomafie, Antimafia and Spatialisation in Climate Discourses on Southern Italy*
37. [Šarić, L.](#), & [Trnavac, R.](#): *Representing Climate Change in South Slavic Online News*
38. [Schleier, I.](#): *Constructing a Sceptical Self: Identity & Legitimation in Climate Sceptic Blogs*
39. [Schmidt, S.](#): *Discursive Construction of Legitimacy in Climate Politics*
40. [Simione, L.](#), [Colombo, S.L.](#), & [Raffone, A.](#): *Defining Environmental Awareness: Conceptual Ambiguities and Practical Implications for Climate Communication*
41. [Sioupi, D.M.](#), & [Sioupi, A.](#): *Reframing Security and Defense: The case of "Green Military"*
42. [Stasiuk-Krajewska, K.](#): *Discourses of climate change in the context of discursive practices around disinformation*
43. [Subin, P.](#): *Monsoon News in the Age of Climate Change: Journalistic Vernaculars in Weather Reporting in India*
44. [Tolis, V.](#): *Discourse analysis, experiential learning, authentic assessment: three perspectives in search of a triadology?*
45. [Utz, A.](#): *Local specificity and horizontal social complexity: Why globally dominant discourses always marginalize real sustainability*
46. [Van Praet, W.](#), & [Lams, L.](#): *Framing climate change in Australian, British, and Canadian children's news: An ecolinguistic study*
47. [Veloso Da Silva, A.](#), & [Gueli, Z.](#): *"Make the Planet Green Again": A critical discourse analysis of right-wing populist climate communication*

## Conference Programme

For the detailed programme and session times, please refer to the UNINT website <https://www.unint.eu> and the conference website <https://discourseanalysis.net/DN33>