‘Living well, within the limits of our planet’: Terminology, Intersubjectivity and Affect in the EU legislation and divulgation of the Environment Action Programme

Katherine E. Russo (Università degli Studi di Napoli “L’Orientale”)
kerusso@unior.it

Over the past decades the European Union has put in place a broad range of environmental legislation. In April 2013 the European Commission adopted the EU strategy on adaptation to climate change, which focuses on three key objectives: Promoting action by Member States; 'Climate-proofing' action at EU level; and Better informed decision-making. Moreover, the 7th Environment Action Programme (EAP) came into force in January 2014 and it is now up to the EU institutions and the Member States to ensure it is implemented. The paper addresses the debate on terminology by taking into consideration common definitions of the terms in the Commission’s glossary on climate change, which was compiled by selecting the most relevant terms from various reports. Yet terms are not always used consistently across reports and studies, policy processes and newspaper discourse. Especially terminology related to sustainability, risk and vulnerability is used in different ways. Following the proposition that language change is influenced by external factors, such as language in use in a community, contact and negotiation of meaning, and interlocutors building common ground intersubjectively, the article contends that terminology related to environmental risk may be analysed in terms of the Appraisal framework, which has found that the lexico-grammatical resources which regulate appraisal, affect and evaluation may be employed explicitly to inscribe and/or implicitly to invoke affects such as worry and fear, not in order to prevent and prescribe them but to intensify and diffuse them (Martin and White 2005). With these aims, the paper will focus on terminology by analysing two corpora, respectively from European Commission policies and newspapers, based on the years 2013 and 2014.

Basic Bibliography:

Katherine E. Russo, PhD University of New South Wales (Sydney), is a Lecturer/Researcher in English Language and Translation at the Università degli studi di Napoli “L’Orientale”. Her research focuses on Language Variation and Change, Translation Studies, Critical Discourse Analysis, Gender, Post-colonial and Whiteness Studies. She is the author of Practices of Proximity: The Appropriation of English in Australian Indigenous Literature (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), winner of the ESSE Book Award for Junior Scholars and of Global English, Transnational Flows: Australia and
New Zealand in Translation (Tangram Edizioni Scientifiche, 2012). She is a member of the Board of the European Association for Studies of Australia and is a member the Management Committee of the European Programme - COST Action IS1101 “Climate change and migration: knowledge, law and policy, and theory”.
