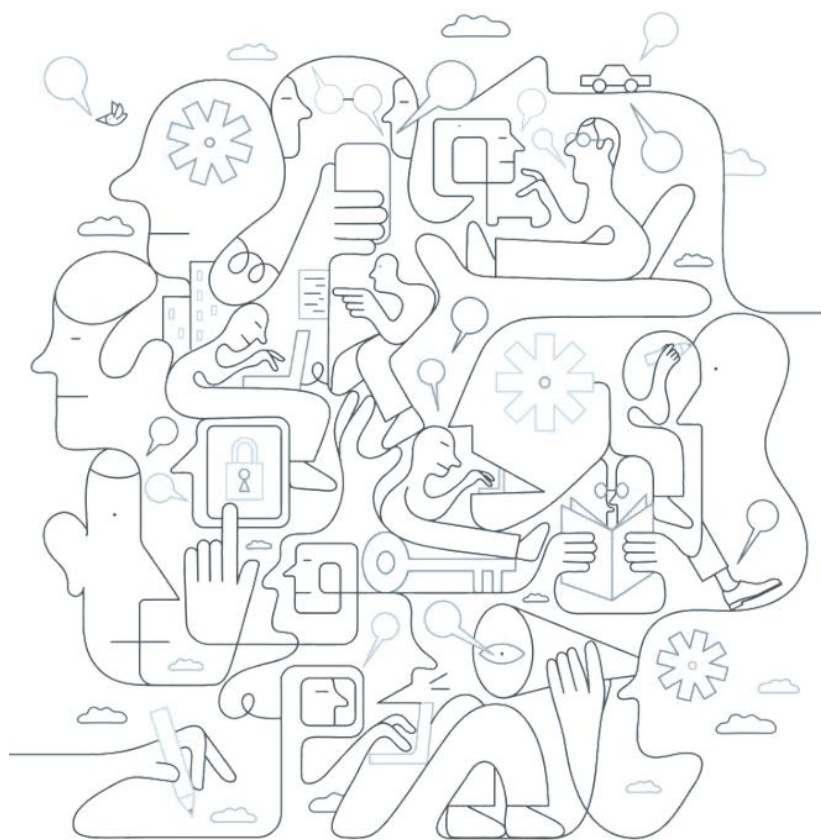


Critical Language Awareness for Sustainability, Solidarity and Inclusion



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PLENARY TALKS

Listed by day and time

PLENARY TALKS WEDNESDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2026

Bias & Binaries: Gender in Language and Translation Technology

Joke Daems

Ghent University

Technology is increasingly being used to automatically generate and translate texts. Although the output can look impressively fluent, this does not mean it is always correct. And even when it is technically correct, it is not necessarily neutral or inclusive. In text generation, women are more likely to be represented as emotional caregivers, while men are more likely to be represented as active leaders. While, in English, a 'doctor' can be a person of any gender, a machine translation system will assign a specific (binary) gender to this person when translating into languages such as Spanish or German. Very often, this translation will be informed by gender stereotypes (a 'doctor' will be a man, a 'housekeeper' a woman). People with nonbinary gender identities are hardly ever represented. Developers and researchers are aware of these issues and are trying to find solutions to make technology less biased and more inclusive, with mixed success. In this presentation, we will explore the origin of these biases in technology, consider their potential impact on society, and identify some of the strategies being used to counter them.

From Apocalypse to Earthrise: Stories That Make Climate Matter

Stef Craps

Ghent University

What can stories do that facts and figures can't? In the face of climate denial, despair, and disconnection, literature has the power to make the crisis feel real—urgent, personal, and emotionally resonant. This lecture explores how climate fiction, or “cli-fi,” helps us move beyond the limits of data-driven discourse by engaging narrative form to reframe how we perceive and relate to the climate emergency. From speculative futures to present-day realism, from poetic protest to experimental literary modes, fiction draws the crisis closer to home. It reveals the lived experience of climate disruption and prompts us to consider its uneven impacts across geographies, generations, and species. Through a range of examples—spanning dystopian collapse and utopian possibility, grief and defiance—the talk shows how fiction can foster critical reflection, challenge dominant assumptions, and make complex systemic issues more tangible. Literary texts do not merely depict the climate crisis; they intervene in it, offering language, perspective, and affective depth to a threat often rendered abstract or overwhelming. Whether by confronting extractivist logics, amplifying marginalized voices, or cultivating new forms of awareness and responsibility, stories shape how climate matters to us—and what futures remain possible.

PLENARY TALK THURSDAY 26 FEBRUARY 2026

Raising Language Awareness through Critical Metaphor Analysis: The Case of Corporate Discourse

Veronika Koller

Lancaster University

As “windows on the mind”, metaphors encode beliefs, norms and values, along with attitudes, emotions and expectations – in short, metaphors are vehicles for ideology. When used in discourse, they do ideological work by framing actors, actions and events as well as by fostering engagement between discourse participants and organising texts in a (pseudo-)logical structure.

In this talk, I will outline the beginnings, main tenets and applications of critical metaphor analysis, an approach that integrates critical discourse studies and cognitive semantics. A particular focus will be on the notion of metaphor scenarios as mini narratives with an evaluative component. Drawing on different theories of grammar, I will discuss how metaphor scenarios can be operationalised in the critical analysis of discourse.

I will illustrate critical metaphor analysis with examples from corporate discourse, including branding, financial disclosure and organisational change. Despite the scale of its impact on social and ecological (in)justice, and the lack of public accountability, corporate discourse remains relatively under-researched in critical discourse studies. I close with a call for more critical metaphor analysis as a way of raising awareness of the ideological nature of corporate discourse.

WORKSHOPS

Listed alphabetically according to first or only workshop organizer

My Invisible Neighbour
Social Class Representation in Language Learning Materials
 Organizer: Miran Ahn

Workshop description

The representation of the world in the texts both reflects and shapes our view. To live in a more open and inclusive world, we would expect language teaching materials to offer a trustworthy, inclusive representation of the target language community as well as of any other societies.

What is considered as representable changes over time. While one generation was uncomfortable with unmarried couples in coursebooks, another now asks where the non-binary individuals are.

After a brief review of critical studies on discrimination in teaching materials, this workshop will examine how people's living conditions —such as housing and leisure activities— are depicted in learning materials for several languages. Afterwards, the participants will compare these with real-world data to question the coverage of social class. We will end the session by discussing to what extent the representation or erasure might influence learning and by reflecting on our own perspectives.

Coursebooks in multiple languages including German and French will be provided for the hands-on activity, but you are very welcome to bring your own copies or ebooks.

From Ideology to Action: Designing Equitable Language Policy in Practice

Organizer: Esther Bettney Heidt

Workshop description

As student populations continue to grow more culturally and linguistically diverse, many educators are questioning how to adapt and respond effectively to these evolving dynamics. Language is central to learning, and language policies explore how individuals use language in various contexts, shaped by local and global factors. Far from being passive documents, language policies reflect ideological positions and directly influence pedagogy, through either challenging or reinforcing social and linguistic injustices. This workshop responds to the question: How can schools that want to shift toward multilingualism engage in a more holistic approach, including language policies that value the full linguistic repertoires of students, families, and educators?

This workshop offers a structured, research-informed process for developing or revising an equity-oriented language policy within diverse educational contexts. Through a "policy-as-practice" perspective, participants will explore both formal, written language policies and their interpretation and appropriation by school agents (Menken & García, 2010), drawing on the work of the Language Policy Working Group, a group of educators from international schools that are members of the Multilingual Learning Research Center (MLRC) School Network. Using their collective expertise, the group developed a structured and systematic process for designing or revising school language policies, which includes:

1. **Research & Information Gathering:** Teams build a school language profile, gathering local data on the linguistic diversity of students, families, and staff to ensure the policy is rooted in the unique school context.
2. **Clarifying Vision and Scope:** Teams identify dominant and critical language ideologies to clarify shared values and set big-picture goals that strengthen equity and inclusion.
3. **Drafting and Implementation:** Teams draft a "living policy" with actionable sections, including sections such as guidance for language support, the explicit integration of translanguaging pedagogies, and clear structures for professional learning that facilitate effective collaboration among language and mainstream subject teachers.
4. **Review and Refinement:** Teams design strategies for ongoing review to ensure the policy reflects current research and evolving realities of their school community.

By engaging with a systematic and collaborative process, teams translate theoretical understandings into concrete actions. The workshop will share examples of school-level policies designed through this process to anchor their language vision in equity and navigate toward more just, multilingual communities. This applied, transformative focus directly aligns with the CLADES goal of cultivating language awareness for a more equitable and sustainable future.

The Transformative Power of Stories: Introducing an Innovative MOOC Project

Organizers: Joanna Chojnicka, Timo Boom, Letizia Prostamo, Bianca Andrei,
Abigail Piltie & Julie Matsuzawa

Workshop description

Language is all around us, at all times, and that is why it (very often) goes by unnoticed. Like fish unaware of the omnipresent water they are swimming in, we are unaware of all this language use and its intricacies. Communication about any kind of issue, then, becomes a constitutive force that actively shapes and conditions our experience of the world. Therefore, raising Critical Language Awareness (CLA) is a prerequisite for responsible citizenship.

In this workshop, we'd like to present a CLA MOOC course we are currently developing to be hosted on the Future Learn platform. The course explores three overarching foci: *pronoun sensitivity* (in its broadest sense), *agentivity* (both grammatical and lexical), and the *effects of framing*. Each theme highlights how seemingly small linguistic patterns influence inclusion and exclusion, responsibility and agency, and the very way we perceive the world. This session builds on elements from these themes, allowing participants to engage hands-on with authentic course materials and experience these dynamics for themselves.

Learners of the online course will develop multiple levels of language awareness (basic, operational, and critical). The proposed session will primarily focus on the basic awareness skills of noticing and recognising textual choices. After this interactive workshop, participants will have honed their eyes and ears to identify and describe subtle linguistic mechanisms that influence our perceptions in communication of any kind of issue. These skills can then be further applied in research, teaching, or professional communication contexts. Additionally, participants will leave with an enhanced sensitivity to how everyday language contributes to shaping social realities and responsibilities.

The Inner Development Goals (IDGs) and the Transformative Potential of Language Awareness

Organizer: Erika Darics

Workshop description

What role does language play in shaping the way we ‘are’, think, relate, and act? How can becoming critically aware of communication transform both personal and collective growth?

This workshop introduces the **Inner Development Goals (IDGs)** as a framework for cultivating transformative education and showcases how **Critical Language Awareness (CLA)** can act as a “meta-competence” to achieve these goals.

In the workshop, participants will engage in activities to progress through the levels of language awareness, from ‘observing’ to ‘applying’, ‘analysing’ and ‘transforming’. Participants will observe how language and communication shape societal structures and power – and importantly, reflect on the emancipatory potential of this knowledge. After the guided tour through the levels of awareness, participants will work together to map these competencies to the IDG pillars- Being, Thinking, Relating, Collaborating, and Acting. The latter is of particular importance: we will think together (sorry, no answers supplied!) about how we can help ourselves and our students to cross the bridge between being aware of something – and acting on that awareness.

This workshop will be particularly beneficial for educators, researchers, and (future) professionals who are committed to transformative education and personal development; and want learn more about the Inner Development Goals.

Language and Crisis Communication: A Critical Language Awareness Lab

Organizers: Aurélie De Waele and inspired students

Workshop description

Crises are not only managed through actions, but also through words. In organisational crisis communication, linguistic choices can clarify what happened or blur responsibility; reassure affected publics or exclude them; and invite accountability or strategically diffuse it. This hands-on workshop offers participants a practical critical language awareness toolkit for analysing how crises are framed, understood, and responded to through language.

The session starts with short, real-world case analyses (e.g., organisational reputational crises, public service failures, product-harm situations, and/or environmental incidents). These cases illustrate how specific linguistic patterns shape perceptions of responsibility, competence, trust, and solidarity. We focus on concrete, transferable analytic “lenses”, including: (1) abstraction vs. concreteness, (2) cues of (un)certainty, (3) agency and responsibility, (4) apology quality and pseudo-apologies, (5) pronouns and positioning and the power relations they imply, (6) comprehensibility and accessibility (readability, jargon, structure), and (7) metaphors that steer interpretation and emotion.

Participants then work in small groups on crisis texts from a provided set. Guided by a worksheet, each group identifies the key linguistic cues at work, discusses ethical and strategic implications (e.g., transparency vs. liability management; inclusive communication vs. institutional distance), and formulates concrete improvement suggestions. Groups will also complete a short rewrite exercise, translating a selected message into a clearer, more responsible, and more accessible version without losing the organisation’s practical constraints.

The workshop is designed for a mixed audience (students, educators, communication professionals, researchers) and aims to produce immediately usable outputs: a shared checklist for analysing crisis texts, rewritten message variants, and a set of discussion prompts that participants can reuse in teaching, training, or professional practice.

What's Behind Your Slides? Critical Language Awareness in Action

Organizers: Matt Drury & Katrin Heucher

Workshop description

Language is a tool that we use to communicate our ideas, but it is so much more than that: words build worlds. Critical Language Awareness (CLA) encourages us to engage in this world-building by reading between the lines of our everyday communication. In this workshop, we encourage lecturers and students to come and engage in a critical reading of their slides. We will give an overview of CLA and outline our next project CLAMAC, which aims to bring CLA into all Dutch business schools. One aspect of this project is to analyse some of the materials with which lecturers communicate with their students. In this workshop, we provide some of the tools and the questions that will help with this process. You'll work individually and in small groups deconstructing some of the language (and other multimodal resources) used in your slides, and reflecting on the worlds that you are helping to build for your students. Students are also very welcome to attend; please bring some (anonymised) lecture slides from your courses, and we'll use CLA to read behind the slides.

From News Discourse to Classroom Practice: Participatory Activities on the Representation of Gender-Based Violence

Organizers: Sara Gemelli & Chiara Zanchi

Workshop description

In this hands-on session, we present a series of participatory workshops for Italian high school students related to the topic of gender-based violence, with a particular focus on the representations of femicides in Italian newspapers. Building on previous work in Frame Semantics, Cognitive Linguistics, and Critical Discourse Analysis, we examined how journalistic discourse frames femicides, shaping the visibility of victims and perpetrators and embedding implicit perspectives that contribute to reinforcing or challenging social perceptions of gender-based violence. Journalistic choices do not merely describe femicides but represent them from a specific point of view, highlighting certain aspects while obscuring others. Narratives about lethal gender-based violence are therefore not isolated stories but part of a wider network of cultural meanings, ideologies, and stereotypes that shape public understanding of the phenomenon.

On the basis of these insights, we developed interactive workshops designed to encourage critical language awareness and reflection on media discourse. Conducted in local high schools in Northern Italy, the workshops engaged students in hands-on activities such as gap-filling, rewriting activities, and collective discussions. For the gap-filling tasks, excerpts from authentic news reports were selected and key words were obscured; participants were asked to predict the missing terms, submitting their answers anonymously through the digital platform Wooclap (<https://www.wooclap.com/>), which enabled us to display responses in real time. Each exercise was then followed by a collective discussion, where students reflected on the proposed answers and identified other potentially problematic elements in the text. This combination of anonymity and interactivity proved fundamental in encouraging participation and in creating a collaborative environment where students felt free to share their observations.

The workshops not only provided a space for critical engagement with journalistic discourse but also offered valuable insights into how young readers perceive and react to the linguistic framing of femicides. Working within the school setting, with extended sessions of up to four hours, allowed for in-depth discussion of the cognitive and social dimensions of language, linking theoretical concepts to concrete practices of media critique. The project therefore demonstrated how linguistic research can extend beyond academia, stimulating a critical approach among young readers while generating new reflections for researchers.

In the conference session, participants will be invited to experience a condensed version of these activities. By engaging in gap-filling tasks and reflective discussions based on authentic news excerpts, they will explore how different linguistic choices frame events, attribute responsibility, and construct cultural meanings of gender-based violence. The interactive format will allow attendees not only to critically examine the framing of femicides in news reports but also to experiment with a methodology that can be adapted to other contexts and topics. In doing so, the session situates itself within ongoing efforts in Critical Discourse Studies to connect academic research with educational and social practices, offering participants a concrete example of how such methods can be implemented in practice.

Supporting Indigenous sustainable development: Practice-based insights into linguistic research with Indigenous and minoritised languages

Organizers: Marcela Huilcán, Maria Mazzoli

Workshop description

Introduction and context

Sustainable development is essential to the future of the world, and this involves integrating languages as a key element of sustainability, with a special focus on supporting endangered language communities. Language is not only a means of communication but a cornerstone of cultural identity, well-being, and intergenerational community continuity. Revitalising Indigenous languages can support broader goals in education, health, and self-determination, and serves as a tangible expression of a community's connection and commitment to its ancestral heritage. We argue that Indigenous language revitalisation must be seen as a central component in seeking sustainability. And such a process needs to go beyond understanding on socio-historical and political aspects of Indigenous communities and their languages; it needs to actively centre Indigenous epistemologies and praxis for language reclamation.

Under the Decolonial Language Awareness framework (DLA), which is defined as “the resurgence of Indigenous consciousness that counters hegemonic language ideologies and reimagines the reparative future of Indigenous and historically minoritised languages” (Phyak, 2025), we propose that linguistic academic research and practice on Indigenous, endangered, and minoritised languages should integrate three key elements: targeted support for language learners, particularly advanced learners; collaborative and community-driven research approaches; and the inclusion of diverse, Indigenous epistemologies.

Before the hands-on session, we will present two case studies: our work with the Mapuche community in Chile and the nêhiyaw (Plains Cree) community in Canada. In collaboration with Fiw-Fiwi nîi Dungun, we co-developed the [Mapudungun Nemülkawe](#), a digital Mapudungun-Spanish dictionary and educational tool integrated into language courses. In the Cree context, we implemented a [Mentor-Apprentice Programme](#) (MAP), at the moment at the pilot stage, designed to support advanced learners of Plains Cree through immersive, one-on-one learning. These initiatives illustrate how co-created and culturally based resources can foster language revitalisation by strengthening language use and, in turn, potentially improving the prospects for intergenerational language transmission.

Workshop activities

In the first part of this hands-on workshop, we will first look at the relevance of language learners and how researchers can support them, we will reflect on what elements need to be considered when engaging in language revitalisation and what theoretical frameworks, such as DLA, can contribute to this.

In the second part of the session, participants will engage in the active co-development of a language revitalization activity and will reflect on the challenges and rewards that such efforts entail.

The goal is to open a venue for thoughts on how frameworks such as DLA can be concretely implemented. After the session, participants will have a clear understanding of how centering Indigenous voices and knowledge systems in language revitalisation can directly contribute to enhancing the chances of language survival for Indigenous communities, and therefore contribute to the sustainable development of these communities. Reflecting on practice-based initiatives is vital to achieving a truly sustainable future - one that builds on having linguistic diversity as a pillar of global sustainability.

Phyak, P. (2025). Developing decolonial language awareness: an exploration of Indigenous countertexts and youth language reclamation in land-based education. *Language Awareness*, 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09658416.2025.2580330>

Campaigning for Gender-Sensitive Language in Online Environments: Strategies and Lessons Learned from the GenderED Coalition Project

Organizers: Sylvia Liuti & Martina Morbidini

Workshop description

The workshop addresses how sexist and misogynistic language circulates online through gendered disinformation and hate speech, reinforcing stereotypes and silencing women's voices. While critical analysis of such discourse is essential, it is equally important to foreground the professional responsibility of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) educators, journalists, influencers and digital content creators in resisting and re-framing these narratives.

Participants will examine real examples of misogynistic online content to identify how language and discourse perpetuate exclusion and symbolic violence. We then explore strategies for using gender-sensitive language and counter-narratives to disrupt stereotypes, resist online misogyny, and foster more inclusive discursive practices. By drawing on feminist linguistic approaches and activist communication strategies, the workshop equips participants with tools to model responsible, justice-oriented communication in their own work.

This workshop positions gender-sensitive language use as both a pedagogical and ethical imperative, highlighting the constructive role MIL professionals can play in shaping online environments that reflect more equitable, inclusive, and just futures.

Workshop Objectives:

Through interactive work and reflective session on the proposed practices and tools, participants will:

- Recognise linguistic strategies that sustain online misogyny and gender stereotypes.
- Understand the ethical and professional role and responsibility of MIL educators in shaping inclusive discourse.
- Learn and practice the use of **gender-sensitive language** in digital content creation.
- Explore **counter-narratives** and storytelling practices that challenge misogyny.
- Develop actionable strategies for fostering safer, more inclusive online environments.

Format & Activities (max 90 minutes):

1. **Framing (15 min):** by exploring how misogynistic discourse circulates in online spaces, participants will explore how gendered disinformation functions as barrier to equality and just society and democratic participation

2. **The GenderED Coalition Experience (15 min): Challenges and Lessons Learned**

Participants are introduced to the [GenderED Coalition](#) project's online campaigns, and strategies to foster gender-fair communication. Together, we reflect on challenges faced in promoting inclusive language online and key lessons learned from practice.

3. **Workshop – How to Campaign for Gender-Sensitive Language (40 min): Counter-Narratives in Action**

In small groups, participants engage in hands-on activities by applying some of the GenderED Coalition strategies. Through critical discourse analysis and creative exercises, they will:

- Identify linguistic strategies that sustain misogyny and stereotypes.
- Experiment with counter-narratives and alternative storytelling practices.
- Design community-based approaches to online campaigning for more inclusive communication.

4. **Reflection & Takeaways (10–15 min):** using inclusive language as a professional practice and social responsibility of MIL Educators.

Read & Meet! The Perks of In-Depth Reading and Readings with Authors for Students in Secondary Education

Organizer: Inge Misschaert

Workshop description

Reading is currently on everyone's lips, as results of different surveys worldwide show a decline in language progression of children and students. Whether AI, television and media of any kind should be blamed for this, is not the issue. Other studies have firmly represented multiple causes. In this workshop, however, a method is illustrated by multiple examples, that shows how with simple measures, children and high school students can (re)discover the joy reading can bring. It also shows how reading and readings by authors can stimulate dialogue in schools and lower the differences and injustices of different social layers in society. The fact that famous authors come to 'their' school is for our students' self-esteem priceless. These visits mirror the possibilities they themselves might have or develop and give most students the drive to do their end of the bargain.

The methods used are not new, but the approach is. In this workshop I will demonstrate how LIST (reading in class) works and give a short demonstration of Reading together (Samen Lezen). During this workshop, participants will get a very good hint of how both methods work and how they can work together. I will also present a selection of books and texts that qualify for these methods.

These three actions combined show very clearly that students who read the same books as their classmates, discuss these books with each other, meet the author and discuss the books they read with them, in the long term show language improvement, possess rich vocabulary and understand complex story plots. Major aspects to enhance the social aspect are the conversations held about what is being read. First with peers, second with teachers and then with the author themselves. In the workshop, we will demonstrate how this works.

Knowledge is not something between school walls anymore, these walls are torn down at that very moment, where reading leads you exactly there: into the world. In combination with the curriculum they have to learn, reading and meeting seems to become the key to the realisation of their ambition.

**Voicing the Future:
The Rhetoric of Future Generations Advocacy in Youth Climate Activism**
Organizer: Jelte Olthof

Will be updated soon

**Listening in/to the Global South:
Sound, Accessibility, and Belonging from Vietnam to the Caribbean**
Organizers: Alexandra Sanchez, Luc Hoang & Elisa Robbe

Workshop description

This workshop / dialogue session examines how language and sound sustain and challenge social (in)justice across Southeast Asia and Latin America. It foregrounds how sonic and discursive practices from the Global South negotiate access, recognition, and belonging within uneven global media systems.

Luc Hoang, a Vietnamese content creator, introduces the emerging yet fragmented landscape of audio description (AD) in Vietnam. Although the *Law on Persons with Disabilities* (2010) guarantees cultural access, it remains largely theoretical: AD is not required for broadcast, cinema, or streaming. In this policy vacuum, awareness of accessibility is slowly growing, while global streaming platforms such as Netflix quietly impose their own accessibility norms through their extensive catalogues and translation infrastructures. This tension highlights a major research and policy gap and raises the question of how Vietnam might articulate accessibility through its own cultural frameworks rather than imported standards.

Elisa Robbe, an ethnographer of migration, explores *cumbia sonidera*, a transnational musical practice that turns sound into visibility and solidarity. Rooted in Afro-Indigenous resistance and working-class migration, *sonideros* use loudspeakers, vinyl, and livestreams to connect dispersed publics. Yet circulation through commercial platforms – record labels or Spotify, where algorithmic curation and state narratives (e.g. ICE-linked propaganda) may surface – shows how appropriation becomes a subtle tool of border control. This tension reveals how *sonideros* struggle to sustain the political force of sound against the global standardization of listening and belonging.

Moderated by Alexandra Sanchez, an audiovisual translation scholar, the session connects accessibility and aurality as intertwined struggles for justice and solidarity. It asks:

1. How do sonic practices create access where policy fails?
2. What can listening teach about visibility and belonging?
3. How can describing and musicking transform silence into solidarity?

Spotting Deceptive Language in Sustainability Reports

Organizers: Maria Pilar Uribe Silva, Erika Darics, Rik van Noord, and Malvina Nissim

Workshop description

This 60-minute hands-on workshop will explore how sustainability communication can obscure human and ecological harms while projecting responsibility. Designed for people interested in critical language awareness, and educators, policymakers, journalist, educator and students working on climate-related topics, the aim is to equip participants with a practical **classroom-ready method for communications** to identify deceptive discourse in Sustainability Reports (SRs), such as CSR and ESG, and other sustainability communication artifacts.

The session draws on a novel framework called the ***Deceptive Language Spectrum*** which includes macro deceptive discourse categories. Each of these is illustrated with its most common manifestations in corporate and business communications, along with examples.

After a short introduction to the theoretical framework, participants will work in small groups (3-4 people) with extracts of sustainability reports. To make the activity more accessible, **each group will focus on one macro category** from the spectrum. Using a concise checklist and guidelines with examples, they will label sentences and/or paragraphs, underline cues, and justify their choices. The identification of deceptive patterns will be facilitated through a group discussion, and link them to material consequences. Each group will rewrite one problematic claim to avoid the deceptive strategies present in the spectrum.

At the end of the session, I will briefly show how Large Language Models (LLMs) can **assist us to identify these patterns** more efficiently in large corporate documents. Using a simple notebook script, I will show how a document can be cleaned, key sections selected, and then analysed by a LLM to highlight paragraphs that may contain deceptive language. The emphasis will remain on the need for human analysis, with AI serving as a supportive/assist tool.

The workshop seeks to generate critical awareness of how language and discourse shape our imaginaries about sustainability. Furthermore, it invites participants to move from detection to critical analysis and redesign, reflecting on how we can avoid - or about how difficult it is to avoid - such language in our own writing, especially when we talk about climate-relative topics.

Learning Goals

Goal 1: Understand what deceptive language is and how it operates in corporate communication.

Goal 2: Recognize the discursive strategies companies use in sustainability reports.

Goal 3: Know what SRs are, and why they matter for corporate accountability, and regulations.

Goal 4: Apply a simple framework to identify deceptive language in real documents excerpts, and see the potential risk and benefits of using LLMs to identify deceptive language.

Session Plan (one hour workshop)

0 - 5 min	Introduction, presentation and framing
5 - 20 min	Group annotation
20 - 40 min	Plenary discussion
40 - 45 min	Rewriting exercise
45 - 55 min	Notebook simulation
55 - 60 min	Summarization and takeaways

Materials

Samples of SRs excerpts (three different companies/sectors, 1-2 pages for report, each document should contain at least one deceptive strategy to be identified for participants)

- A fashion company (H&M, 2024)
- A food company (Albert Heijn, 2024)
- A tech company (Microsoft, 2025)

“Pardon me for apologizing!” Analysing Public Apologies as Sites of Linguistic Manipulation

Lieve Van Boxstael

“Pardon me for apologizing!” Analysing Public Apologies as Sites of Linguistic Manipulation

Organizer: Lieve Van Boxtael

Workshop description

In recent decades, political apologies for historical injustices have become increasingly prominent in public discourse. These highly scripted and strategically staged performances often present themselves as acts of humility while subtly steering audiences toward accepting a particular narrative of responsibility, victimhood, and reconciliation. This workshop invites participants to interrogate this hidden imperative: the expectation that a public apology must be accepted uncritically simply because it performs the linguistic shape of contrition.

Building on principles from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), participants will be introduced to a set of **dissective analytical tools** designed to uncover the manipulative potential of apologetic discourse. After a short, accessible conceptual introduction, the workshop will guide participants through hands-on linguistic analysis of excerpts from political apologies (including, but not limited to, speeches by Justin Trudeau and Stephen Harper). Working in small groups, participants will apply three core diagnostic prompts:

1. **How is the past wrong described and who is constructed as the victim?**
2. **How is the apology formally articulated?**
3. **How are the perpetrators or responsible agents identified—or obscured?**

These tools foreground the lexicogrammatical choices through which apologies can conceal agency, redistribute responsibility, or stage reconciliation without genuine accountability. The workshop culminates in a collective discussion and a short, live survey in which participants evaluate new, unseen apologetic excerpts using the same framework, testing the limits of what counts as a “well-functioning” public apology.

By shifting from passive reception to active dissection, this workshop fosters what Hasan terms *reflection literacy*: an awareness of how language construes social reality and how citizens can resist being positioned by institutional discourse. Participants will leave with a transferable analytic toolkit for critically engaging with public apologies across political and institutional contexts.

Multilingual Care with AI - Building Trust, Safety and Solidarity through Digital Language Tools

Organizers: Ellen Van Praet, Pablo Decock, Fien Dewiest & Marie Delegrange

Workshop description

Increasing linguistic diversity challenges healthcare institutions to communicate ethically and inclusively with patients who speak little or no dominant language. While professional interpreters are essential, they are not always available. As a result, healthcare workers increasingly turn to AI-based translation and communication tools - speech-to-speech apps, image-supported translators, and multilingual chatbots - to bridge linguistic gaps.

Rather than promoting technology as a quick fix, the workshop engages participants in questioning how language, power, and care intertwine in an AI-mediated world - and how we can use technology more wisely, ethically, and humanely in high-stakes contexts such as healthcare.

This interactive workshop offers a critical and hands-on exploration of how multilingual digital tools can both enable and endanger inclusive care communication. The session builds on research and practice developed within the “MATCHeN” research project (Ghent University & HOGENT, www.matchen.org). Participants are invited to experiment, reflect, and co-create knowledge around three guiding questions:

1. How do AI-based language tools transform multilingual interaction in healthcare?
2. What linguistic, ethical, and emotional dynamics emerge when digital mediation replaces human contact?
3. How can practitioners critically and creatively use these tools to foster solidarity and patient inclusion rather than exclusion?

Through live demonstrations, collaborative exercises, and guided reflection, participants will test and compare various multilingual communication apps currently used in hospitals and primary care settings. We will analyse authentic use cases (e.g., emergency consultations, medication explanations, consent procedures) and apply a decision-tree model to evaluate the appropriateness, risks, and inclusivity of different “bridging functions” - from professional interpreters to AI apps and visual tools.

By the end of the workshop, participants will:

- Gain critical language awareness of how digital translation technologies shape discourse, trust, and agency in multilingual encounters.
- Learn to assess and select digital tools through a framework grounded in linguistic justice and patient safety.
- Develop a reflective stance toward the promises and limitations of AI in human communication.

- Contribute to a broader discussion on how technology can support rather than undermine solidarity and inclusion in multilingual institutions.

The session is highly interactive and suited for an interdisciplinary audience of scholars, educators, practitioners, and students. No prior technical expertise is required, only curiosity, openness, and a willingness to explore the linguistic and ethical terrain of digital multilingual care.

Refreshing Foreign Language Learning Methods in France's Underserved K12 Schools, with Physical Activity, European Volunteers and AI

Organizer: Arthur Vincent

Workshop description

In the banlieues north of Paris, opportunities for foreign language learning, meaningful engagement with European/global citizenship and international mobility are difficult to access. “Réseaux d’éducation prioritaire” (Priority Education Networks, REP thereafter) schools face enduring challenges: socioeconomic precarity, underfunded resources, and a local context where foreign language learning and foreign language immersion opportunities often seem remote from daily realities, despite the omnipresence of plurilinguism. This is where non-profit organization Planet Citizens intervenes by mobilizing a team of European volunteers who alongside kindergarten, elementary and middle school teachers, teach languages such as English, German and Italian.

Each year, Planet Citizens delivers hundreds of immersive, interactive workshops across schools, recreation centers, and sports clubs in underserved areas. These sessions foster not only playful acquisition of languages, but also spark new imaginaries of intercultural Europeanness among youth categorized as “Youth with less opportunities”. The European Solidarity Corps volunteers, themselves coming from different European countries, embody intercultural solidarity and provide living proof that these pupils, despite structural barriers, are themselves “European citizens”. This message is reinforced through everyday exchanges and shared community life, as the volunteers themselves are accommodated in a “priority neighbourhood” in Saint-Denis during their 6-months missions.

A major persistent barrier is access to high-quality, teacher-supportive language resources. Teachers in REP schools often lack the training and materials to create meaningful language immersion or project-based activities. In this context, LangoMove—a new digital textbook for teachers sharing the method developed by Planet Citizens—offers a critical lever for equity. The app’s activity generation tool, powered by AI, allows teachers to instantly produce tailored, context-aware, and linguistically scaffolded resources, adapted to the actual needs of their students, in hundreds of different languages. From complete lesson plans and vocabulary games to pronunciation guides and flashcards, LangoMove dramatically reduces the gap usually experienced by schools where resources are scarcest.

AI thus becomes a force multiplier for social justice: rather than replacing pedagogical missions, the tool empowers local teachers to bridge the inequality of access to language learning.

By deeply embedding inclusive, participatory, and digitally-enabled language education in the most fragile territories, the project demonstrates the transformative, justice-oriented potential of critical language awareness. Social justice in language education is not only about curricula or textbooks, but about inventive solidarity: a European community made real through presence, dialogue, and technological innovation that targets precisely those whom existing systems leave behind.

In this talk I will present the method combining foreign language teaching and physical activities used by teachers and volunteers, and demonstrate the Langomove app.

STANDALONE PRESENTATIONS

Listed alphabetically according to first or only presenter

A CLA Analysis of "Bad Grammar"

Laura Aull

For most learners and educators, English grammar means something to regulate, complain about, or hide from. In school, we learn things like "the subject and verb must agree" rather than multiple, dialect-specific ways to make subjects and verbs agree. Out of school, we hear complaints about *bad grammar*—often, as a badge of honour, a sign of education, or a reason to feel ashamed. If we use social media, we see groups from Reddit's Grammar Police to X's Grammar Cops dedicated to finding and shaming particular English usage. If we read a book published in English since 1815, we are more likely to see *grammar* described as *bad* or *poor* than any other adjective.¹

In other words, most of us learn: (1) grammar = rules to memorize, but not necessarily to understand, and (2) grammar = something to police and correct.

We do not learn grammar as a set of patterns to recognize, or a means to make the world a kinder place.

This presentation takes a different tack. It approaches English grammar via pattern-recognition based on diverse global usage, rather than error-hunting based on prescriptive native-speaker preferences. To do so, the presentation proposes a three-part framework of grammatical possibility, meaning, and use and then applies the framework to popular examples of "bad grammar." **Possibility** refers to what is permissible within the constraints of English as a structural system, which allows for both flexibility and stability across registers and dialects. **Meaning** refers to whether we can follow what a text is describing and how parts of it relate. And **Use** refers to corpus patterns in English(es) across the world, including in AI large language models.

This approach rests on two ideas. One is that being able to recognize systematic patterns in global English allows us to challenge assumptions about *good grammar* often based on social, rather than linguistic, norms. The other is that being able to recognize more language patterns—not just those corresponding to native-speaker-based rule-hunting—means more English knowledge.

The presentation contains four parts:

1. An opening that briefly notes the dominant paradigm in English teaching and popular writing advice. In this paradigm, *good grammar* is based on error-hunting rather than pattern recognition, which leaves ample ground for linguistic miseducation and language discrimination.
2. An introduction to the alternative: the possibility-meaning-use framework.
3. An illustration of the framework through critical analysis of top online search results for "bad English grammar" (examples of subject/ verb agreement and apostrophe use [its vs it's])—by putting each one to the test of possibility, meaning, and use.

4. A conclusion that summarises how this critical language awareness (CLA) approach to grammar offers both critical understanding and practical language knowledge that can make us more kind, curious, informed global citizens.

Perceived Sustainability: Web Search Trends and Social Media Debates in the Decade 2015-2025

Luca Brigada Villa and Chiara Zanchi

While the representation of sustainability in academic, institutional, and policy contexts has been widely examined (Ala-Uddin, 2019; Nervino et al. 2025) its perception by the general public remains comparatively underexplored. Yet understanding how civil society interprets and engages with sustainability is crucial, as public perceptions shape social acceptance, behavioral change, and ultimately the effectiveness of sustainability strategies (Lorenzoni et al. 2007). This study explores how the concept of sustainability is perceived and discussed by the public in Italy, drawing on a mixed-methods analysis of web search trends and social media discourse from 2015 to 2025. It addresses two central questions: (1) how does civil society engage with the multiple dimensions of sustainability, and (2) how have these perceptions and interactions evolved over the past decade?

The quantitative component analyzed Google search trends for 22 keywords and five topics spanning environmental, social, and governance domains. Results show significant variation across issues. Environmental terms exhibited sharp, event-driven peaks, while governance-related concepts such as ESG displayed a steady upward trajectory after 2019, coinciding with new regulatory frameworks. Localized and cyclical dynamics also emerged: for example, searches for “water crisis” correlated strongly with geographic proximity and direct local impact.

The qualitative analysis examined public responses on X (formerly Twitter) to selected sustainability-related news stories published by major Italian newspapers, selected for their thematic proximity to one or more dimensions of sustainability. Engagement patterns varied depending on the nature of the event. Social tragedies, such as the death of Satnam Singh, elicited broad consensus and condemnatory reactions. By contrast, governance and ideological debates, such as controversies around DEI policies or the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, generated polarized discourse, often marked by aggressive tones and digressions from the central issue.

Taken together, the findings reveal a growing public interest in sustainability, shaped both by external shocks and by regulatory change. The analysis highlights a persistent dichotomy: public engagement tends to be reactive, triggered by direct impacts and emotionally charged events, whereas professional and corporate discourse is more proactive, structured by long-term strategies and policy frameworks. This divide underscores a key challenge for sustainability communication: bridging the gap between systemic, abstract dimensions of sustainability and the lived experiences of individuals. Making these issues tangible and relevant to everyday life is essential to foster broader alignment between societal perceptions and institutional sustainability agendas.

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Metaphor as Testimony: Adolescents' Discursive Framing of Their Lived Experiences of Sexual Violence

Melody Yunzhu Chen

Adolescents who experience sexual violence often struggle to explain what happened to them and why its impact persists. This difficulty arises in part because literal language cannot capture the complexity of such experiences, making metaphor an essential meaning-making resource (Ben-Amitay et al., 2015). Yet little research examines adolescents' own accounts of sexual violence, and even less is known about how they describe it in informal digital spaces. Most existing work focuses on adults, clinical interviews, or legal testimony (Bailey et al, 2024). This leaves a gap in understanding how young people make sense of such experiences during a formative stage of development.

This study examines how adolescents use metaphor to understand and communicate experience of sexual violence, and how these metaphors reveal what they need from adults, families, and institutions. The analysis draws on a corpus of Reddit posts written by adolescents and young adults reflecting on sexual violence during adolescence. A corpus-assisted approach and MIP identify metaphor use and salience, coded in NVivo to analyse how metaphors shape emotion, agency and embodiment (Pragglejaz Group, 2007; Demmen et al., 2015; Chen, 2023).

The findings show that metaphors carry the greatest meaning load during the event and in its aftermath. Adolescents describe the event through metaphors of invasion, freezing, shrinking, and dissociation. These metaphors demonstrate that many could not move, speak, or resist, and they challenge common misreading of immobility and silence as consent. In the aftermath, metaphors of dirtiness, contamination and collapse capture shame, self-blame, and the struggle to move forward. Across accounts, young people frame home, school, and public settings as unsafe or collapsed, which reveals patterns of institutional absence.

The study shows how Reddit functions as a symbolic space in which adolescents articulate harm that often remains unseen offline. Understanding their metaphorical framing is essential for preventive and trauma-informed education, safeguarding policies, and protective environments. The paper calls for approaches that treat adolescents as experts in their own experiences and support them in building inclusive spaces that enable open and safe conversations about sexuality.

The Effectiveness of Everyday Linguistic Agency: Reconceptualizing Self-Advocacy Among People with Physical Disabilities

Cato Denissen

As societies strive for sustainability, solidarity, and inclusion, language emerges as a critical resource for reshaping social participation. For people with physical disabilities, however, face-to-face communication often remains burdened by stigma, stereotypes, and deficit-oriented narratives that frame them as passive recipients of care. Such linguistic constructions reinforce dependency and marginalization, while failing to equip people with physical disabilities with practical means to act, decide, and advocate in everyday moments where social autonomy is negotiated. Therefore, my research examines how the untapped potential of self-advocacy can empower people with physical disabilities to proactively shape their social environments and challenge discriminatory narratives of dependency.

This study reimagines self-advocacy as a language-mediated, functional practice grounded in everyday interaction, capable of resisting deficit-based perspectives and fostering emancipatory participation. Drawing on an extensive literature review and focus group data from 35 people with physical disabilities, it introduces a framework built on four interrelated building blocks:

Intrapersonal awareness: the understanding of one's own capabilities, attitudes, and working points, and the re-evaluation of disability and associated stigmas as socially constructed rather than inherent limitations. This promotes the view of self-advocacy as a purposeful linguistic action towards autonomy, not a sign of dependence.

Interpersonal awareness: the understanding of others' perceptions of and responses to disability to enable strategic navigation of social interactions, and to foster shared responsibility for inclusion.

Communicative competence: effectively mobilizing language to successfully complete linguistic actions such as initiating contact, expressing needs, countering misconceptions, and requesting and securing accommodations.

Disclosure strategies: managing when and how to share disability-related information to achieve personal goals and positive outcomes.

By situating self-advocacy within the field of critical language awareness, this reconceptualization foregrounds language as a medium of agency and challenges deficit-based perspectives. In breaking away from outdated narratives of dependency and incapability, self-advocacy allocates proactive communicative responsibility to people with physical disabilities. As such, this study highlights the activist potential of linguistic practices in countering social exclusion and enabling more sustainable and inclusive social interactions and participation. In doing so, the study calls for rethinking disability support and advocacy through the lens of linguistic empowerment, facilitating people with physical disabilities to help shape more emancipatory futures for themselves.

Climate Skepticism in German Political Discourse. Argumentative Patterns and Lexical Expressions **Jens Fleischhauer**

There is a discrepancy in the assessment of man-made climate change when looking at scientific expertise on the one hand and public discourse on the other. In scientific circles, there is broad consensus that, in addition to natural climate change, there is also man-made climate change. In political discourse in Germany – but not just there –, a decidedly climate-skeptical and far-right party – Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) – is currently gaining votes. As a result, climate-skeptical positions play a more central role in political and media discourse than the scientific consensus on climate change would actually suggest.

Through a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis of the AfD's European election programs from 2014, 2019 and 2024, I show that:

1. climate-skeptical positions have become more radical over the years, which is reflected quantitatively in an increase in climate-skeptical statements in election manifestos and qualitatively in the positions advocated, and
2. which linguistic strategies the party uses to express climate-skeptical positions.

I classify the climate-skeptical positions identifiable in the election manifestos into a typology of climate-skeptical positions (e.g., Rahmstorf 2004, Capstick & Pidgeon 2014; Van Rensburgs 2015): Although it does not take any positions that deny global warming, it does deny that warming is caused by human activity (causal skepticism), that warming has negative consequences (consequential skepticism), and that climate protection measures can have positive effects (measure skepticism). This applies to the most recent program, but was less pronounced in older programs. This change should be understood as a response to the fact that climate change and climate protection have become increasingly important topics in public discourse in recent years, for example in the form of the For Future movement. The change in election programs can therefore be seen as a response to the positive public attention given to the issue.

The climate-skeptical patterns of argumentation are primarily revealed at the level of arguments, but individual linguistic characteristics can be identified in the AfD's climate discourse. In terms of argumentation, science is delegitimized by framing it as ideological or politically dependent. At the level of linguistic characteristics, we find frequent use of distance markers (e.g., *sogenannt*- 'so-called') and vocabulary with explicitly negative connotations (e.g., *Wahnsinn* 'madness' and *Klimahysterie* 'climate hysteria').

In my presentation, I will show which argumentative and linguistic strategies are used by a right-wing political party to realize climate-skeptical positions. From this, we learn how climate-critical right-wing

parties use language to delegitimize climate policy measures and spread positions critical of climate change.

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“Energy Transition” is not Degrowth. Unveiling the Ideological Underpinnings of Techno-Solutionist French-Speaking Media Discourse (2020-2025)

Thomas Franck

This communication examines the circulation of the formula *transition énergétique* across a macro-corpus of French-speaking media—including Le Soir, La Libre, Le Monde, Le Figaro, and Libération—between 2020 and 2025, as well as within a focused micro-corpus: the Belgian daily Le Soir, where the term appears 380 times between 24 February 2022 and 5 November 2024. Rather than treating the formula as a neutral descriptor (denotation), we argue that it operates as a mythic device (connotation): it encapsulates imaginaries of the future, economic growth, and technological optimism, while simultaneously concealing the tensions and contradictions inherent to ecological crises (Fressoz 2024). In this regard, transition énergétique should be understood less as a descriptive label (the designation of a referent) than as a rhetorical construct—one that projects a vision of a desirable and urgent future, framed as a moral imperative yet rarely subjected to critical scrutiny regarding its ideological underpinnings (for qualitative analysis of French-speaking press discourse, see Audet 2016; Kanjanapinyowong 2019; Nappi 2024; Marlot 2025; and Wagener 2025).

Our methodology combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches (Bennett 2015; Taylor & Marchi 2018; Longrée & Vanni 2025), but is primarily grounded in the tradition of Analyse du discours d’origine française, ADF (Maingueneau 2021; Rabatel 2017, 2021; Temmar 2025). In the initial phase, the Hyperbase software is employed to identify recurrent lexical patterns and typical co-occurrences across both the macro- and micro-corpus—verbs such as accélérer, réussir, soutenir; nouns like cadence, rythme, tempo; and the adjectives such as juste and vert. However, frequency alone is not sufficient to uncover the implicit meanings embedded in the formula transition énergétique. It is through enunciative and rhetorical framing that the discursive stakes become visible within the micro-corpus: the formula is most often deployed without explicit definition, in an assertive mode that projects an ethos of areté (Amossy 2010: 20). In contrast, marked usages—such as quotation marks, irony, or cynical metaphor—introduce enunciative distance and reveal tensions typically concealed by the formula’s apparent self-evidence (Krieg-Planque 2009).

Three principal sociodiscursive tendencies can be identified:

- An imaginary of acceleration: Verbs associated with the formula place strong emphasis on speed and productivity (e.g. accélérer la cadence), situating the notion of “transition” within an industrial temporality rooted in Taylorist principles, rather than signaling a rupture aligned with ecological paradigms. Temporal verbs frequently co-occur with deontic modals or impersonal expressions of obligation (e.g. il faut, devoir).
- Moralization through the “green” lexicon: The adjective vert recurs across expressions (e.g. énergie verte, hydrogène vert and investissement vert), functioning as a reassuring signifier of ecological

legitimacy while eliding the inherent contradictions of the oxymoron *capitalisme vert* (Fox 2022; Williams 2024).

- Reframing nuclear energy as a pragmatic topos: The “dramatic comeback” (*retour fracassant*) of nuclear power, alongside the nature metaphor *bouquet énergétique*, exemplifies the formula’s discursive adaptability, enabling the reframing of contested energy sources within the narrative of *énergie décarbonnée* (Fressoz 2024; Nippert 2024).

Taken together, these findings suggest that *transition énergétique* functions less as a transparent description of (historical) reality than as a discursive mechanism of ideological erasure—simultaneously depoliticizing and re-politicizing ecological debates (Anquetil & Duteil 2024). It obscures the underlying tensions of extractivist capitalism while fostering a fragile semblance of consensus. This underscores the rhetorical power of “formulas” (Krieg-Planque 2009; Hilgert, Kleiber & Palma 2023) to naturalize policy decisions and, more broadly, to render language itself as self-evident truth.

Although *Le Soir* represents only a single case, it sheds lights on a broader discursive mechanism with significant implications for discourse analysis. The micro-corpus invites expansion through comparative inquiry—for instance, with *La Libre* and *Le Monde*. How are energy futures linguistically constructed, and to what extent the lexicon of “transition” contributes to the depoliticization of ecological debates? By foregrounding these questions, this communication aims not merely to describe a media phenomenon, but to foster collective reflection on how ADF can reveal the ideological operations underpinning contemporary narratives of sustainability—particularly by challenging the limitations of Van Dijk (1998, 2008) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). In this light, *transition énergétique* emerges as a productive lens through which to reconsider the role of language in delineating both the constraints and the possibilities of ecological futures and programmatic discourse (Basso Fossali 2020, 2021).

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Advertising and Language Awareness: Protecting Customers.

Walter Giordano

Companies nowadays strive to occupy a larger share of their reference markets. They leverage their strategies to convey their image, identity and reputation on the market. In order to be recognizable in consumers' minds. The recognition and the feeling that the brand is unique on the market is defined by Aaker (1991) as brand awareness. Brand awareness implies knowledge, trust, and responsible understanding. Advertising is commonly recognized as the fastest way to promote a brand on the market. It, then, carries values, a filtered reality, perceived quality and new functions of use. Yet, modern advertising seems to convey ambiguous or multifaceted information, framing messages to lead consumers towards construed imaginaries related to the product and its functions. These deliberate strategies may undermine consumers' awareness of the product. Advertisers can use language to affect awareness: many chemistry, biology and medicine terms are used in baby food, mineral water or pet food advertising, for example. They are difficult to understand, and they would cast the advertised products in the domain of pharmaceuticals and drugs. Another example comes from cosmetics, where so many fabricated elements and fancy chemical mixtures seem to convince customers of the effectiveness of the product (in Italy, a shampoo claims to contain *carbone magnetico* – magnetic carbon; another one contains *argilla straordinaria*, extraordinary clay. In both cases, words matter, as consumers are led to believe that the product may express hidden, powerful qualities.

Advertisers can also act in another way, to shape consumer awareness: they can cut the possible expert intermediary off (e.g, the doctor in prescription drug advertising, the financial advisor in online trading platforms advertising), affecting the balance of power in the expert-user relationship. In a former study, Giordano (2019) demonstrates that out of 72 prescription drug advertisements, only 16 commercials portrayed a doctor and only in 11 of them did the doctor speak. This implies that the consumer must take information on his\her own, on the product's suitability and side effects, for example. As a consequence of this, it is pretty clear that consumers don't have the knowledge to understand and make the correct decision. The research questions to be answered by future research on advertising discourse are: Are consumers really aware of what is advertised? Is language awareness necessary to deliver fair, correct and useful information? What are the ways to identify whether advertising delivers ethical, fair and crystal-clear messages, ensuring full consumer awareness?

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From Liberation to Legitimation. Critical Language Awareness of Sectarian Narratives in Post-Revolutionary Syria **Rania Habib**

This study contributes to critical language awareness by investigating how digital political discourse has transformed the revolutionary narrative in Syria following the collapse of the Assad regime on December 8, 2024. Using a corpus of over 6,000 social media comments responding to speeches by transitional leader Ahmad al-Shar‘ (Al-Jawlanī), the paper draws on digital ethnography, critical discourse analysis, and stance-taking frameworks to trace the discursive mechanisms through which the original liberation narrative – centered on freedom and democratic governance – has been systematically refuted and replaced by a sectarian counter-narrative.

Rather than presenting full narratives individually, commentators’ lexical choices, metaphorical expressions, and evaluative stances collectively construct a discourse of Sunni supremacy, legitimizing leadership based on religious identity rather than governance performance. Terms such as *majūs* (“followers of an ancient religion adopted and developed by Zoroaster”), *rawāfiḍ* (“rejectionists”), and *khawārij* (“seceders”), and phrases like *biddna niḥkimkum biḥshihāta/biḥṣṣīrmāi* (“we will rule over you by force”) function as markers of in-group alignment and out-group exclusion, signaling ideological polarization and undermining democratic claims. Metaphors including *tashbīḥ* (“regime loyalist”) and *takwī* (“shifting political allegiance”) are further used to frame the other political side as illegitimate.

The analysis demonstrates how aspirational concepts like *madaniyya* (“civil society”) are invoked to stress the need for inclusive, secular governance in contrast to the emergent sectarian rule, highlighting a contest between master narratives and counter-narratives in digital discourse. This discursive shift is not merely rhetorical: language choices on social media platforms correlate with materialized violence, exemplified by attacks on Alawite and Druze communities in Syria’s coastal region and Al-Suwayda’ city, respectively.

By combining corpus-based digital discourse analysis with sociolinguistic theory and critical discourse analysis, this paper demonstrates how everyday online commentary collectively constructs a potent counter-narrative that refutes the original democratic vision of the revolution. It underscores the persuasive power of narrative framing, stance-taking, and metaphor in shaping political legitimacy, revealing how digital discourse can transform emancipatory aspirations into mechanisms of exclusion and authority legitimization. The findings contribute to broader understandings of political narrative construction, showing how linguistic and digital practices interact to redefine political identities, polarize societies, and reshape transitional contexts. By exposing how online language reproduces symbolic and material violence against minority groups, the paper highlights the tangible social consequences of discursive polarization. It argues that cultivating critical awareness of linguistic framing and narrative stance is essential to rebuilding democratic solidarity and fostering inclusive discourse in post-conflict contexts. Ultimately, this study illustrates how language and discourse simultaneously sustain and challenge social injustice.

The Colonial-Ecological Entanglement: Critical Language Awareness and Ecological Justice in the Brazilian Amazon

Leina Jucá

This presentation discusses the intersection between language, discourse, and ecological (in)justice, analyzing the Brazilian Amazon as a critical case study of coloniality (Quijano, 2000; 1992). We adopt the framework of *Abyssal Thinking* (Sousa Santos, 2009; 2007), which maintains a structural division between the metropolitan center – where law and rights prevail – and the Amazon as periphery, that shapes how the region is systematically narrated as a resource frontier. This work is supported by the analysis of Ferdinand (2022), who affirms that political domination and environmental destruction are strongly connected in a colonial-ecological entanglement. The 2020 energy blackout in Amapá – a state located in the Brazilian Amazon Forest – which left more than 700,000 people without power for 22 days, works as an empirical symptom of this dynamic, demonstrating how fragile infrastructure and systemic negligence are functional results of a colonial machine that prioritizes profit and the accumulation of wealth over human life and ecological preservation. We propose a call for *Critical Language Awareness* (CLA) so that it becomes possible to perceive and intervene in ecological injustice.

The main goal of this presentation is to establish the theoretical need to view ecological injustice in the Amazon as a direct continuation of colonial structures, and not as a simple management failure or a case of regional underdevelopment (Rodney, 1975). Specifically, the session intends to: illustrate the operation of the *colonial machine* and discuss the implications of the *shipwreck* metaphor (Ferdinand, 2022) for understanding permanent ecological exploitation and vulnerability in Amazonian communities; examine how the Abyssal Thinking is maintained by the creation of invisibility and the systematic reduction of traditional *lifeworlds*; and reflect on the ethical responsibility of CLA research and its potential for fostering a decolonial ecological praxis in language education. The presentation offers three main contributions of a theoretical and empirical nature.

First, we analyze the discourse of *progress* that justifies the systematic exploitation of Amazonian resources and serve as a continuous operation of the colonial machine, showing how the construction of this ecological entanglement makes environmental degradation inseparable from social subjugation. This analysis uses the Amapá blackout as a critical event that exposed the deep structural abandonment.

Second, we focus on examining how the language of state governance and hegemonic institutions creates and maintains the Abyssal Thinking (Sousa Santos, 2009; 2007), creating invisibility. We demonstrate how the *lifeworlds* of traditional communities are systematically reduced, relegating them to a condition of systemic danger, which is reflected by the metaphor of the shipwreck.

Finally, the presentation emphasizes the role of Language Teacher Education in the Global South as a crucial space for decolonial intervention. We argue that teacher education must explicitly develop CLA to equip

educators with tools to promote pedagogical spaces where knowledge and linguistic systems of resistance and existence are validated as legitimate systems.

This effort seeks to build frameworks for linguistic solidarity and ecological inclusion, directly challenging the Abyssal Thinking that defines the Amazon as a disposable territory.

Crisis as a Strategy of European Union Migration Governmentality

Elijah Lazar

With the 2024 adoption of the Pact on Migration and Asylum, the latest and arguably most ambitious European Union wide policy on migration, the EU promises a "fresh start" to address migration and asylum processes. This however, is occurring against a European backdrop of increasing migration as *crisis* discourse and the normalisation of extreme anti-immigration claims by state institutions (Cantat et al., 2025 ; D'Amato & Lucarelli, 2019). Despite scholars such as Koselleck (1982/2006) and Gentili (2021) studying crisis as a governmental strategy for neoliberal societies, *crisis* as a strategy of migration governance has not been comparably deconstructed in linguistics. The objective of the present study is therefore to investigate how institutional EU discourse on migration harnesses *crisis* discourse. The central research questions are: I. How is migration as *crisis* discourse used by the EU and its member states? II. What are the socio-political and legal ramifications for "migrants" and "refugees" of such discourse? To answer these multivalent questions, I employ a critical macro-discursive methodology, drawing on Gee (2014) and van Dijk (2018) to deconstruct and analyse a dataset of institutional discourses consisting of the Pact on Migration and Asylum, the Geneva Convention on Refugees, and the French immigration reforms of 2024 (LOI n° 2024-42). Using Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "assemblage" as a theoretical framework, I explore the construction of institutional discourses on migration, arguing for their fundamental intertextuality, crucial to their legitimacy. Building on Agamben (1998), I argue that the characterisation of migration as *crisis* in such discourse is used to justify exceptional measures from the EU and its member states, ranging from heightened surveillance to the fundamental *de-judicialization* of the asylum process. I argue that migration as *crisis* governance is prolonged indefinitely as the exception becomes the rule, leaving "migrants" and "refugees" *excluded* from society and legal protection.

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Postmemory and Semiotic Landscapes as Resistance: The Impact of Traumatic Historical Events on Community-based Practices for Social Change

Andréa Machado de Almeida Mattos

This paper discusses the impact of traumatic historical events on the semiotic landscapes and creative community-based practices based on the concept of postmemory, a term coined by Marianne Hirsch during the 1990's. As stated by Hirsch, in a book published in 2008, postmemory “describes the relationship of the second generation with powerful, often traumatic, experiences that preceded their births but were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own right”. Building on Halbwachs' idea of collective memory, Hirsch uses the concept of postmemory in the context of the Jewish Holocaust during the Second World War, but other traumatic events around the world may also be examined through such lenses: the two World Wars, the Atomic Bombs in Japan, the Chornobyl nuclear accident in Ukraine, the experiences of indigenous peoples in Residential Schools in Canada, and many other examples. In my own research with English language teachers in Brazil, I have worked with the Military Coup of 1964, which set off more than 20 years of dictatorship, and still impacts all areas of our daily life, including education and language teaching. In this paper, we will discuss how a community in Medellin, Colombia, uses graffiti to construct a creative semiotic landscape to preserve the memory of past conflicts and to build a sense of belonging among its members, with the objective of creating space for recovery of past traumas and challenging dominant perspectives of power and subjugation. In this context, the concept of postmemory may contribute to a better understanding of how creative practices may foster resilience and promote transformation, resisting material and symbolic forces of domination. We believe that resorting to memory to help confront and problematize traumatic historical events may create space for creative social practices that try to avoid the errors of the past and aim at constructing better social futures by contesting inequalities and fighting injustice. The aim of this paper, therefore, is to look at the critical potential of postmemory to promote awareness of traumatic historical events, problematizing the relationship between community life stories, memory, and postmemory as tools for critical thinking, awareness, recovery/resilience and resistance, refusing to repeat the horrors of the past and engaging into the possibilities of more just social futures.

The Voice of Water: Selective Agency Attribution in Serbian Media Discourse

Nevena Manic

Contemporary humanities have increasingly recognized that treating water as a commodity obscures its ecological complexity and implies its entanglement with structures of power. Water functions simultaneously as a tool of territorial governance and as a substance eluding human control. However, discourse about water has been predominantly focused on struggles for human power or right over water. Therefore, this study examines how Serbian media discourse selectively constructs water's agency through linguistic strategies that reveal underlying anthropocentric assumptions about the natural world. I investigate a paradox in environmental journalism: water is frequently attributed agency when discussed as a self-regenerating resource (e.g. "water can cleanse itself," "rivers recover naturally"), yet this agency (together with water's qualities) is erased in discussions of water management and distribution, where discourse shifts to anthropocentric instrumentalism (e.g. "clean water as a human right," "safeguarding water resources"). The study hypothesizes that media discourse grants water agency selectively, primarily in contexts that minimize human responsibility for environmental degradation, while denying water agency and intrinsic value in practical contexts, thereby subverting anthropocentric world and blocking possibilities for a more ecocentric world. The analysis focuses on Serbian news, forums and reports addressing three thematic areas: water privatization, water pollution, and water management, comprising articles from major Serbian news outlets, official gazettes and similar representative samples of national discourse. Using corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis, I will attempt to: (1) identify and quantify instances where water is constructed as an agent versus patient across different thematic contexts; (2) analyze the linguistic mechanisms through which agency is granted or withheld; (3) examine collocational patterns surrounding water-related lexemes; and (4) contextualize findings within broader ideological frameworks of environmental communication, in line with the ecological discourse analysis. This research contributes to ecolinguistic scholarship by demonstrating how discourse with selective agency of nature sustains ecological injustice, and proposes pathways toward environmental communication that recognizes water as ecological subject with inherent value beyond anthropocentric utility.

Unveiling Multimodal Soft Hate Speech in Mediterranean Online News: Systematic Tools to Counter Implicit Forms of Discrimination

Marta Marcora, Letizia Prostamo, Janina Wildfeuer & Dimitris Serafis

This talk presents a multimodal annotation study aimed at identifying the dominant intersemiotic patterns in online news articles that convey, sustain, or invoke implicit forms of hate, namely *soft hate speech*, as defined by Assimakopoulos et al. (2017).

Our project focuses on designing robust and comprehensive tools for identifying and analyzing the multimodal realizations of such *soft hate speech* – with the overarching goal of raising critical multimodal awareness and developing strategies to counter the global spread of hate and discrimination. To this end, we developed, tested, and refined a multi-level annotation scheme for the identification of visual and verbal patterns in the representation of social actors and actions in online news. Theoretically grounded in van Leeuwen's (2008) work, this scheme aims to unveil how the interplay of semiotic modes contributes to the construction of social reality by reproducing social disparities and enforcing exclusionary politics. The scheme is applied to a dataset of headlines and press photos that appeared during the perceived peak years of the so-called “refugee crisis” (2015-2017), across three Mediterranean countries: Italy, Malta, and Greece. In this talk, we present the results of a pilot annotation study conducted among four annotators. Based on our empirical findings, we discuss their broader socio-political implications, with the aim of fostering critical engagement and enhancing multimodal literacy.

With our study, we highlight the urgency to scrutinize covert forms of hate speech that evade legal scrutiny (following Serafis & Assimakopoulos, 2025). Such implicit manifestations, in fact, are considered particularly hazardous as, once infiltrated into public discourses, they can desensitise the general public and normalize discriminatory and intolerant stances within society at large (Assimakopoulos, 2020). In particular, the study builds on research demonstrating how multimodal discourse sustains and reproduces hatred discrimination through implicit argumentative inferences (Serafis, 2022; Serafis & Wildfeuer, 2025).

All in all, this study seeks to provide tools to address the growing need for large-scale analyses of multimodal artefacts that visualize patterns of discriminatory discourse. Identifying these patterns will help create understanding and awareness of these covert forms of hate which can in turn propagate and perpetrate prejudice and intolerance against vulnerable social groups (Serafis et al., 2020).

Who Gets Linguistic Justice? Boundaries of Inclusion and Exclusion in the Minoritized-Language Classroom

Camille Marvin

In minoritized language contexts, language-in-education (LEP) policy can serve as an important mechanism to transform the linguistic practices of school communities toward increased use of the target language. In the case of the trilingual Aran Valley, Spain, a micro-territory where Spanish, Catalan and Aranese (Occitan) hold official status, such policy measures are discursively based on conceptions of universal linguistic rights. Aran is home to a high concentration of cultural and linguistic diversity among its residents, which is consistently presented as a "problem" for meeting Aranese language policy objectives. Boundaries within the language-in-education policy emerge through the everyday interactions of Aranese schools and delineate upon which bodies the policy practices are meant to affect and in which ways. Given this discrepancy, whose linguistic rights are deemed more legitimate than others', and how are these differences reproduced?

In this presentation I will analyze ethnographic classroom observations and interviews with educators produced during ten months of fieldwork in the primary schools of the Aran Valley. Following the "border as method" approach (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013) in my analysis, I found that the language policy practices of the school, as they were enacted discursively/materially in the classroom, inscribed borders of inclusion and exclusion upon the children in the class. These borders of difference were dynamic and fluid, extending beyond the walls of the school to interpellate other school community members (such as students' families) as (il)legitimate speaker subjects. This analysis underlines the colonial ontologies that minoritized language revitalization projects can reproduce, ultimately creating disparate language policies for those deemed legitimate speakers and those who are not. In my discussion of these results I will argue that for there to be real sociolinguistic transformation, scholars and policymakers must deconstruct essentialist projects of "social cohesion" and focus on empowering community actors' relationships and interdependency to each other in their everyday linguistic practices. This dialogue is especially urgent in the domain of language education policy, where children's legitimacy and rights are at stake.

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Textbooks, Gender, and Symbolic Power: Critical Perspectives on English Curriculum in Sindh, Pakistan

Shumaila Memon

This study critically examines how gender is constructed, regulated, and reproduced through English language textbooks in provincial curricula in Sindh, Pakistan. Drawing on Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy and sociolinguistic theories of language and power, the research interrogates textbooks as sites of ideological control, where language functions to naturalize gender hierarchies and marginalize non-binary and transgender identities.

Fifteen curriculum gatekeepers—including textbook writers, reviewers, and teachers—were interviewed to investigate perceptions of gender equity, awareness of transformative potentials, and practices surrounding textbook use. Using critical discourse analysis, the study reveals that English textbooks overwhelmingly reproduce binary gender norms, privileging male-centric narratives and confining female representations to idealized, socially sanctioned roles such as teachers or medical professionals. Non-binary and transgender identities are entirely excluded. Textbooks are framed institutionally as neutral, yet the analysis exposes their role in symbolic violence, subtly legitimizing societal inequalities and shaping learner subjectivities.

Teachers' classroom enactments further reinforce these norms, demonstrating how institutional discourse intersects with everyday pedagogical practice to maintain gendered hierarchies. Participants exhibited limited awareness of the emancipatory potential of curricula, highlighting systemic constraints on reform. The findings underscore that language in educational materials is a powerful instrument of both oppression and potential transformation. By critically integrating gender-inclusive content and pedagogical practices, textbooks can become sites for cultivating critical consciousness, social justice, and equity, illustrating how discourse can be leveraged to challenge entrenched social structures and reimagine more inclusive futures.

Victim or Survivor? Identity Construction in Victim Narratives

Evangelia Mourtzanou

This paper examines the discourse of sexual harassment victims through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), with a particular focus on victim narratives. By employing Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) and Multimodal Analysis, this research aims to explore how events are represented in victim testimonies, the discursive strategies used to construct victim identities when interacting as social actors, and the role of multimodal elements in shaping these narratives.

Presenting findings from an ongoing analysis, the paper initially focuses on the case of Sofia Bekatorou, a key figure in Greece's #MeToo movement. Through an in-depth examination of her public testimony, the study identified patterns in relational and experiential processes, transitivity structures, and lexical cohesion strategies that contribute to the representation of victimhood. These preliminary findings indicate that language choices and discursive strategies play a crucial role in shaping perceptions of agency and identity within the victim-survivor spectrum.

Building upon the above analysis, the paper also examines other narratives, including those of Zeta Douka, who was verbally and psychologically abused by a colleague of hers during a play. Following the analysis of the first case study (concerning Sofia Bekatorou), in the case of Zeta Douka, relational and experiential processes, transitivity structures, semantic fields and lexical cohesion strategies are employed to analyze the various identities of the victim, such as woman, mother, victim, survivor. Furthermore, by applying Labov's narrative framework, the study investigates how the structure and delivery of these testimonies contribute to broader societal understandings of victimization and survival.

The proposed paper contributes to the critical understanding of how victims articulate their experiences and how these narratives impact public discourse on primarily sexual harassment. The case studies will be analysed and eventually compared in order to identify points of convergence and difference and ultimately, draw conclusions that can lead to generalising hypotheses on the perception of this public discourse.

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A Pillar for the Future or a Fad Diet? Competing Metaphors in Media Sustainability Coverage

Laura Narisano

Although the term sustainability has become ubiquitous in public discourse, it remains conceptually vague and open to multiple interpretations (Purvis et al., 2019). Traditionally defined as development that meets present needs without compromising those of future generations, its flexibility enables it to act as a “floating signifier” (Catenaccio, 2019), adaptable to divergent agendas. Far from being a purely scientific concept, sustainability is a socially and politically constructed phenomenon with consequences across multiple domains (Bonfadelli, 2010). The way it is communicated in the public sphere, where the media holds a privileged position, thus carries substantial weight. Media representations of events can have enduring effects, influencing collective understandings and attitudes (Baker et al., 2013). Because of its authority orientation (Hansen, 1991), journalism tends to privilege a narrow range of institutional sources, particularly those from government and mainstream business (Yacouis, 2017). This dependence elevates corporate actors as credible voices, reinforcing a framing of “green consumerism” (Atanasova, 2019) that presents sustainability as compatible with continued economic growth (Diprose et al., 2017). As a result, sustainability has become closely linked to ethicality, and corporations increasingly adopt its language to signal social responsibility and retain legitimacy (Catenaccio, 2019; Fuoli & Beelitz, 2023). Metaphor provides a revealing analytical lens for examining such processes, as it enables audiences to comprehend complex or abstract phenomena through familiar frames (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Yet, in doing so, metaphors also selectively highlight and conceal specific aspects of a concept (Semino et al., 2018), shaping how it is understood. Conventional expressions tend to reproduce established patterns and dominant assumptions, while creative ones can be exploited to alter or challenge them, introducing alternative perspectives (van Poppel, 2021).

This study explores how sustainability is figuratively constructed in British and Italian newspapers through a corpus-based approach. A dataset of articles was compiled from national outlets, following the adoption of the EU’s 8th Environment Action Programme (European Commission, 2022). Metaphors were identified using an adapted version of MIPVU (Steen et al., 2010) and analysed through Musolf’s (2006) scenario-based framework to assess their discursive implications. The JOURNEY metaphor emerged as the dominant frame; together with the BUILDING metaphor, it portrays the implementation of sustainability as a gradual, effortful but rewarding activity. However, scenario-level analysis reveals less common variants within the JOURNEY domain, depicting sustainability as, for example, a turn, signalling urgency and radical transformation rather than steady progress. More creative figurative expressions offer sharper critiques of mainstream narratives, exposing contradictions and proposing alternative ways of conceptualising environmental and social responsibility. These tensions surface clearly in debates around ESG principles, which are frequently questioned for their reliability and effectiveness and described in the corpus, for instance, as a “fad diet”. Overall, while the press largely perpetuates incremental and growth-oriented

understandings of sustainability, innovative metaphors occasionally disrupt this continuity, revealing its contested and ideologically charged nature.

Speaking the Unspeakable? Queer Climate Trauma in Sim Kern's *Depart, Depart!* Corpus Navalón-Guzmán

Within trauma studies, language has traditionally been conceptualized as a casualty of the traumatic event. Foundational accounts depict trauma as an overwhelming experience that fractures linguistic expression and leaves survivors caught between silence and repetition. In this view, overcoming trauma entails finding a language for what is unspeakable, even if it is sometimes impossible to do so. However, over the last decade, new developments within trauma theory have widened this view by integrating cultural, historical, and environmental dimensions into the conditions that generate and transmit psychic wounds. Building on this shift, recent work in queer theory and the environmental humanities reframe trauma as a slow, cumulative, and often imperceptible form of psychic and structural violence that emerges from them. From within this slowness, a critical question arises: might trauma speak, not through rupture, but through new languages of vulnerability and resistance?

Taking this question as its point of departure, this paper investigates how queer climate trauma is articulated in Sim Kern's novella *Depart, Depart!* (2020). The text portrays the aftermath of a catastrophic flood in Houston through the perspective of Noah, a young trans man haunted by both the material devastation of climate collapse and structural inequalities. Far from portraying trauma as linguistic paralysis, Kern's narrative foregrounds the expressive capacities of language in the face of environmental crisis. The text combines personal experience and political action to expose the disproportionate vulnerability of queer, racialized, and economically precarious communities to climate disaster while creating a space for queer resilience and solidarity.

Drawing on pluralistic trauma theory, particularly its extensions into climate trauma (Craps 2020; Kaplan 2015), and bringing it into dialogue with queer theoretical accounts of affect and embodiment (Cvetkovich 2003; Halberstam 2018; Malatino 2022), this paper reads Kern's *Depart, Depart!* as a site where ecological and queer vulnerabilities converge. Through close textual and thematic analysis, it examines how the novella reconfigures language from a symptom of rupture into an instrument of relation, critique, and world-making. *Depart, Depart!* reveals that queer expression, precisely through its fluidity, multiplicity, and resistance to normative closure, functions as a potential linguistic strategy for confronting the uneven psychic and material burdens generated by climate collapse. By foregrounding queer voices within ecological crisis, the novella performs an act of public awareness, demonstrating that discussing trauma from the margins is already a step toward imagining a more inclusive and sustainable future.

Was It About Caring or About Resisting? Discursive Representations of the Postcolonial Relationship Between Belgium and the Democratic Republic of Congo

Lucie Niclaes

From a cognitive linguistics perspective, the meaning of situations and events is the object of a constant discursive construction (Hart 2017, Talmy 2000). This discursive meaning is not fixed, but permanently interacts with an evolving context (Crespo-Fernández 2021) and exists amidst a certain number of alternative discourses (Vandenberghe 2014). European colonial history provides an illustrative example of these tensions, with the rise of colonial discourse having shaped a hierarchical representation of superior colonisers versus inferior colonised (Elaref 2023), while alternative conceptualisations have precisely refused this conceptualisation (Thomas 2023). The case of the Belgian colonisation of Congo (now Democratic Republic of Congo) is no exception to this phenomenon, and traces of these competing discourses can be found in current debates related to postcolonial issues (e.g. possible apologies for colonial crimes) (Goddeeris 2015).

This study approaches such representations from the perspective of the agentivity of respectively Belgium and the DRC concerning actions related to the (post)colonial period. Agentivity is understood as “causal relation between an agent entity, an intentional action and the state of who is affected by the effects of the action” and constructed through multiple linguistic means (e.g. semantic roles, syntactic function, syntactic position) (De Cock & Michaud Maturana 2014). In a postcolonial context, it provides interesting insights into such discourses given i) the fact that colonial discourse traditionally presents the capacity to act as a characteristic of colonisers, and ii) the possible interplay between being attributed responsibility for negative actions committed during the colonial period, and being asked to contribute to a reparation for them. In order to explore these possible interactions, I analyse the representation of Belgium and the DRC in three different kinds of recently produced discourses: official speeches delivered by Belgian king Philip during his visit to the DRC in 2022, comments on social media written by Congolese reacting to this visit, and Belgian press articles addressing topics related to the postcolonial relationship. After having extracted every reference to Belgium or to the DRC in these productions, I code them on the basis of different parameters related to agentivity (such as semantic roles, syntactic functions). This offers quantitative findings, which are complemented with a qualitative analysis. I furthermore investigate the extent to which the degree of agentivity associated with the two countries varies depending on whether the sentence in which the reference is embedded addresses the Belgian colonial period (when the actions committed can lead to demands for compensation), or later periods of time. Preliminary findings suggest that Philip’s official speeches propose an unequal representation of a very agentive Belgium versus a very little agentive DRC, which is maintained when he talks about the colonial period as long as it comes to actions considered to be positive. The Congolese social media commentators, by contrast, seem to more clearly address a range of colonial crimes and construe a more agentive representation of the DRC. Finally, I expect press articles to

show varying agentivity patterns depending on to whom they give a voice (i.e. afro-descendent communities, NGOs, politicians, etc.).

The Linguistic Framing of Animal Agency in Parliamentary Discussions

Iiris Nuutinen

A prominent part of our relationship with nature is our attempt to separate ourselves from nature and make a distinction between nature and culture (Herlin 2021, 256). Even so, our separation from nature has come with a cost: it has been proven that the environment no longer activates sense of belonging in the human mind. Instead, the environment is seen as something surrounding us, an entity that we humans are not part of. (Lakoff 2010, 76.) However, it is also known that it matters how we talk about animals: a clear image of a species makes us feel entitled to act ethically toward that species (Stibbe 2020, 151).

In this presentation, I will analyse how politicians in the Finnish Parliament discuss animals' agency when they suggest updates on the legislation on animals' wellbeing. In the analysis, I focus on the ways in which the politicians talk about animals as active agents or mere objects of human deeds to better understand what kinds of characteristics are attributed to the animals and their wellbeing.

The theoretical background of my research combines ecolinguistics and cognitive linguistics. My research shares the interests in animal issues that have become a topic of many ecolinguistic research projects lately. In my research, the central term from cognitive linguistics is frame. I use the term frame to describe the reoccurring patterns in talk about animals. From this theoretical background I also borrow tools to analyse grammatical and semantic agency as well as erasure.

The data of this study consist of three parliamentary discussions regarding the legislation on animals' wellbeing (dated 19.9.2024). The duration of each discussion is approximately 30 minutes. In addition to these discussions, I analyse a longer, approximately three-hour discussion in which politicians suggest updates on hunting legislation. This discussion took place April 9th, 2025. The types of animals discussed in this data are farm animals, prey, and hunting dogs, as the topics of the discussions I analyse are den hunting, tie stall barns, farrowing stalls and castration of male piglets.

The key finding in my research so far is that animals are usually positioned as subjects when the talk portrays animals as having little agency. By contrast, the animals are usually both a subject and an agent in phrases that describe what the animals would do if their options were less limited. In other words, animals are both subjects and agents when the phrase depicts kinds of utopias or imagines more freedom and therefore more agency for the animals. The most reoccurring frames I have identified are frames of farming, hunting, economy and control, but I have also identified frames defined by animals' wellbeing and freedom. The study I am presenting is part of my doctoral research.

Play as a Site of Creative Resistance to Inequality: An Interactional Sociolinguistic Perspective

Iris Padiou

This paper examines how play can be used to challenge and transform social hierarchies, particularly in organizations supporting migrant and homeless people. Drawing on interactional sociolinguistics, the study explores how interactional practices in game settings may both reproduce and unsettle established hierarchies. By analyzing the micro-processes through which power relations are negotiated and reconfigured in interaction, this paper seeks to document how the enactment of play within collectives committed to social equality opens fleeting yet significant spaces for reimagining social relations.

Solidarity-based organizations are not isolated from the broader social world and from social inequalities based on gender, class, race, language, etc. Moreover, as institutions, they produce their own hierarchies, often positioning salaried staff and volunteers in relations of authority over the people they assist (Padiou 2022). Yet focusing exclusively on the (re)production of inequality risks “reproducing the same hegemonic effect that we are meant to question”, overlooking the fact that “hegemony is not seamless” (Bonnin 2021, p.75). Therefore, this paper shifts attention to the moments when the established order wavers. It examines how members of a collective oriented toward ideals of equality and hospitality use play to reconfigure, however temporarily, the hierarchies that structure their everyday relations.

This paper focuses on a game designed by a Parisian organization to valorize the linguistic repertoires of its French-language students – undocumented adult migrants. In this setting, the game masters are the students themselves, while the other players are volunteers, migrants and homeless people supported by the organization. Game masters are thus granted epistemic authority and linguistic legitimacy that are usually denied to them. This challenges the hierarchies structuring relationships within the organization, where migrant and homeless people are typically subordinated to volunteers and salaried staff.

The study is grounded in interactional sociolinguistics and draws on work on categorization (Sacks 1992) and frame analysis (Goffman 1974) to explore the transformative potential of play in contexts of inequality. The game is approached as a frame that displays its own “internal” roles and categories, while not being completely autonomous from the “external” organizational and social frames (Sacks 1992). It is thus conceived as a setting in which structures of power can be temporarily reconfigured, inverted, or reimagined. The analysis is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted over two years in the aforementioned organization. It focuses on the video recording of a game session and its multimodal transcription. It offers a close examination of the ways “external” categories, tied to the organization and broader social order, intersect with “internal” categories emerging within the game frame. It shows that although dominant structures of inequality may leak into the game frame, the play situation itself has a transformative potential, allowing players to experience unfamiliar positions. Without neglecting the reproduction of power relations, this paper highlights the transformative potential of interactional practices in game settings. It also

demonstrates the value of an ethnographic approach and of interactional sociolinguistics for studying practices that resist power relations and reframe societal norms.

Codified Power: A Comparative Study of Language Ideologies in Educational Policy

Caroline E Parker, Esther Bettney-Heidt & Mariana Castro

Far from being neutral, language education policies assert ideological positions that influence pedagogy and either challenge or reinforce social and linguistic injustices. This paper presents findings of a multi-site, comparative case study of the link between language, discourse, and social (in)justice within the critical domain of language policies in educational settings. The study includes sites within the educational contexts of two US states (Wisconsin and Rhode Island) and two international schools (one bilingual and one English-immersion). By looking comparatively at vastly different contexts (state policies that apply to multiple schools and international school policies that apply to one school but are embedded in broader cultural contexts), we examine how each provides a lens into how policies in practice become visible manifestations of ideologies.

Drawing on critical language awareness through an ecological lens, the authors examined official policy documents alongside the lived experiences and interpretive practices of practitioners captured through semi-structured interviews. The analysis of public policy documents mapped both dominant language ideologies, such as monolingualism, standardization, and deficit models of multilingualism, and critical language ideologies, such as the recognition of linguistic injustices, inclusion of translanguaging pedagogies, and acknowledgement of diverse linguistic identities, embedded in the official discourse. Interviews with identified arbiters and implementers of the policies triangulated the document analysis.

Crucially, the study moves beyond the "policy-as-text" to include the "policy-as-practice" perspective. The voices of educators and administrators from these settings are a vital component to uncover the critical gap between top-down policy and on-the-ground reality, where educators' own language ideologies often shape and negotiate policy implementation in ways that either reinforce or resist structural injustices (e.g., differential valuation of languages of power versus community languages).

The findings will illuminate how varying educational policies—from state-mandated programs to the explicit multilingual models of international schools—reflect and reinforce distinct social hierarchies. By comparing these settings, the paper seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of how language ideologies are codified, contested, and ultimately impact equity, identity, and access for multilingual students, thereby offering pathways for developing more justice-oriented language awareness in educational policy and practice, aligning directly with the goals of the CLADES project.

Language, Power, and Access to Healthcare: Discursive Inequalities in Communication with Migrant Patients at *La Paz Hospital*

Carmen Pena Díaz, Candelas Bayón Cenitagoya & Belén Llopis Pérez

This paper examines the discursive dynamics of patient consultations in the public hospital La Paz in Spain, with a focus on how language barriers shape migrant patients' access to healthcare as a fundamental social right. Using qualitative discourse analysis of recorded consultations and ethnographic observations, the study explores how institutional language practices — including reliance on monolingual Spanish, use of technical jargon, and limited availability of interpreters — can naturalize unequal power relations and restrict migrants' participation in decision-making about their own health. The analysis also considers how patients and healthcare professionals negotiate these barriers through strategies such as code-switching, reliance on family members as *ad hoc* interpreters, or gestures and embodied communication.

While these practices may temporarily bridge linguistic gaps, they often reinforce precarious access to rights by placing the burden of adaptation on patients. At the same time, moments of resistance emerge when patients reframe interactions through narrative insistence, emotional appeals, or translingual practices that challenge the dominance of monolingual norms. By situating consultations as sites where language, migration, and institutional authority intersect, the paper highlights both the injustices perpetuated through discourse and the potential of alternative communicative practices to reimagine healthcare as more inclusive. In doing so, it contributes to broader debates on how language can sustain or contest inequalities, and on the activist potential of discourse to advance more just futures for migrant communities.

Discourses of Truthfulness and Narrative Standards: A Linguistic-Ethnographic Perspective on Helping Encounters with Asylum Seekers

Lotte Remue, Marie Jacobs & Katrijn Maryns

The stories that asylum seekers tell about why they fled their home country are a crucial element in the legal assessment of their case and are therefore at the heart of every asylum encounter. Procedural requirements oblige asylum applicants to produce, disclose and perform truth (Fassin, 2013; Doyle 2021). There is, however, a discrepancy between the institutional expectations of what kind of narrative indexes a true refugee identity and the experiential truth which asylum seekers are prone to voice through personal narratives (Barsky, 1994; Maryns & Blommaert, 2002, Jacobs & Maryns, 2022). While narrative standards of truth have been observed in asylum interviews and are evident in the written records of asylum cases (Maryns, 2006; Smith-Khan, 2017; Vogl 2024), they also appear in the discourse of those who offer help and support in the asylum process. When asylum seekers prepare for their interviews with their guardians, lawyers or social workers, the notion of “truth” and ideologies about what kind of narrative indexes “truth” often come to the fore.

In this presentation, we draw on linguistic-ethnographic fieldwork data in the form of participant observations and audio recordings of such “helping encounters” to show how the truthfulness of narratives is negotiated and evaluated interactionally. Our sociolinguistic analysis shows how service providers anticipate and reproduce institutional views of truthfulness by fostering static views of what a true narrative looks like, and by imposing narrative expectations and limits on the disclosure of experiences. A lack of common ground and compassion fatigue on the part of the helping workers complicates the interactional quest for a narrative that will be deemed institutionally valid – ultimately raising questions about whether a black and white distinction between truths and lies is productive in the context of asylum determination.

Audio/visual Counter-Narratives of Migration in Mexico: Coffee, Cinema, and Radical Hospitality in Times of Border Hostility

Elisa Robbe

This contribution examines how grassroots community initiatives in Mexico construct and disseminate counter-narratives of migration through audio/visual discourse, embodied interaction and the re-signification of public space. Particularly, the analysis focuses on the project **Ambigú Cafébici Ambulante**, a mobile coffee bar and community cinema based in Mexico-city that transforms streets and plazas into convivial spaces of encounter, challenging dominant rhetoric that fuels and normalizes anti-immigrant sentiment and border violence.

Drawing on eight months of participatory ethnography, combined with multimodal critical discourse analysis, the study explores Ambigú's practice of narrative resistance. Their itinerant coffee-and-cinema practices unfold against the backdrop of Trump 2.0 (2025)—a period marked by escalating border militarization, and anti-immigrant propaganda, circulating at an ever-accelerating pace in digital media. Following an ethnographic approach of *Implicated Passion Research* (Varela-Huerta, 2025)—aimed at constructing polyphonic memory of contemporary migrations—the study traces Ambigú's audio/visual discourses and their creative dissemination: on coffee bags and bicycles, during cultural encounters, and in the documentaries they show.

By creating communal encounters through coffee, cycling, and film, Ambigú deconstructs the “othering” discourses of criminalization and victimization that undergird the so-called “border spectacle” (Gabrielli & Varela-Huerta, 2024). Instead, they reframe migration as a natural human response to socio-ecological changes, and as a political act of resistance.

This ethos further resonates within a broader constellation of grassroots movements in Mexico that intertwine agroecology, food sharing, and storytelling as practices of radical hospitality. From organic coffee fincas, practicing regenerative agriculture, to *Las Patronas*' community kitchen, which provides food and care to migrants, these projects forge a relational approach to socioecological justice.

Bringing these initiatives into dialogue reveals an open-ended meshwork of resistance rooted in slowness, radical listening, and the reconstruction of both land and collective memory. Their shared discursive practices unsettle dominant narratives that isolate human mobility from broader ecological and historical processes. By dismantling the presumed naturalness of borders, they invite a reimagination of borders and belonging—an oppositional gaze (hooks, 2014)—that exceeds exclusionary logics.

Ultimately, this contribution argues that grassroots audio/visual and agroecological practices constitute tools for constructing and disseminating counter-narratives of migrants' resistances. In times of algorithmic acceleration and border hostility, these projects invite us to slow down, to listen and to imagine otherwise—

to perceive the world in alternative ways through the intertwined acts of cultivating, cooking, and storytelling.

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Corpus-Assisted Ecolinguistics and a Grammar of Enchantment in Nature Writing

Martina Russo

The aim of this paper is to explore how language can express and promote enchantment with nature. The concept of enchantment follows Carson's (1956) notion of a *sense of wonder*, understood as fascination, absorption, and deep respect and care for the natural world. While much literature has documented the disenchanting role of language, often shaped by destructive ideologies that obscure human responsibility in the climate crisis, this research seeks to subvert such tendencies by examining how linguistic choices in contemporary Nature Writing can cultivate ecocentric narratives and foster ecological awareness (Abram, 1996).

The guiding framework of the study is my ecosophy *Interconnect!* (Næss, 1995), which emphasizes communion, belonging, care, and respect. These values underpin the reconfiguration of anthropocentric narratives, advocating for “new stories to live by” (Stibbe 2021, 2024) that foreground interconnectedness and more-than-human agency.

The project advances three hypotheses:

1. Nature writers construct relationality through inclusive and reciprocal pronouns that highlight shared agency and individualize more-than-human life.
2. Lexico-grammatical resources are mobilized to construe the agency of the natural world and to create vivid, positively connoted descriptions that evoke enchantment.
3. Nature writers invite emotional and experiential engagement with nature, resisting narrowly rationalist framings.

These hypotheses guide the analysis of a purpose-built corpus of contemporary non-fiction Nature Writing, consisting of 38 books (1,432,599 tokens) published between 2010–2024. The aim is to outline a “grammar of enchantment”, linguistic patterns lexical that convey reverence for nature and invite readers into ecological connection.

The study is situated within ecolinguistics (Fill & Mühlhäusler, 2001; Fill & Penz, 2018; Stibbe, 2021, 2024) and adopts a corpus-assisted methodology (Poole, 2022). Quantitative findings are complemented by qualitative close readings, which enable critical interpretation of ecological framings, values, and ideologies.

This paper argues that enchantment, far from being a peripheral affective stance, emerges as a powerful discursive resource in ecological storytelling. By identifying the linguistic features that construe enchantment, the study contributes to understanding how language can resist disenchantment, cultivate ecological values, and encourage reconnection with the living world.

Disclosing a Social Italian Grammar for Efficient Ethics. Framing Resistance in the GOEL Movement **Paul Sambre**

This paper investigates how counterhegemonic discourse opposing the 'ndrangheta, a Calabrian mafia organization known for its global criminal reach and strategic infiltration of institutions, is linguistically constructed through contrastive grammatical and discursive structures. The study draws on a corpus of transcribed public talks by Vincenzo Linarello, founder of the GOEL movement, which promotes *etica efficace* (*effective ethics*), a form of ethics that is not only morally sound but also socially and economically transformative (Linarello et al., 2023; Strano, 2023).

The research integrates three analytical dimensions: (1) logical relations between clauses and discourse segments (Ferrari, 2014; Ferrari & Zampese, 2016)), (2) lexical concept pairs that contrast mafia and antimafia values, attributed to (3) semantic frames from cognitively inspired Berkeley FrameNet (Boas, 2025; Boas et al., 2024). These dimensions are unified into a constructicon: a grammar of resistance that embeds conceptually grounded lexical items into clause-level and discourse-level structures.

Logical relations such as opposition (*La mafia distrugge, ma GOEL costruisce* – *The mafia destroys, but GOEL builds*), purpose (*GOEL agisce per il cambiamento* – *GOEL acts for change*), and concession (*Sebbene la mafia sia potente...* – *Although the mafia is powerful...*) are realized through subordination, coordination, and nominal or verbal phrases. These structures are complemented by transphrastic connectives like *tuttavia* (nevertheless), *da un lato... dall'altro lato...* (on one side... on the other...), or *ecco perché...* (*this is why...*), which organize discourse into ideologically charged sequences.

The lexical analysis reveals a systematic juxtaposition of negative and positive concepts, e.g., *violenza* (*violence*) vs. *etica efficace* (*effective ethics*), *minaccia* (*threat*) vs. *speranza* (*hope*), *controllo* (*control*) vs. *autonomia* (*autonomy*), which are anchored in contrasting semantic frames such as Crime_scenario vs. Social_movement, or Illicit_behavior vs. Helping. These pairings are not merely thematic but grammatically encoded in constructions that foreground ethical agency and delegitimize criminal power.

Central to this grammar is the notion of *segni efficaci* (*effective signs*), signs that combine communicative and performative force. These include social rituals like the *Festa della Ripartenza* (*Restart Festival*), which transforms mafia violence into collective acts of solidarity and hope.

By disclosing a social Italian grammar for efficient Antimafia ethics, this study contributes to Critical Language Awareness and the analysis of Social (In)justice. It demonstrates how language can be mobilized to challenge hegemonic narratives of violent criminality and foster sustainability, solidarity, and inclusion. The proposed constructicon offers a transferable applied (Borin & Lyngfelt, 2025) lexical description of lexical (anti)mafia pairs, but also a grammatical model for analyzing the counterframing discourse of social

movements (Dijk, 2023), in other domains, sharing a critical take on aspects they oppose through positive values based on solidarity, social cooperation, and a sustainable agriculture.

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Social Actor Representations in Children's Environmental Justice Narratives: A Critical Linguistic Analysis

Helen Sauntson & Clare Cunningham

The global climate crisis is one of the greatest challenges to ever face humanity (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2021). Whilst further mitigation is an urgent matter for adult individuals and the institutions largely responsible, some of the longer-term adaptation to the ongoing effects of this crisis will doubtless fall to today's children to manage. Children's eco-narratives about the environment have not yet received much attention, and their conceptualisations of the environment are often marginalised and silenced. We contend that pluralistic understandings of the environment and ecological in/justice must incorporate children's perspectives as a matter of urgency.

This research reported in this paper explores the discursive and visual semiotic features used by children in narratives that they produced about the environment and what they perceived as important relationships in nature. Data comprises 40 stories produced by 38 children aged 5-11. A Critical Discourse Analysis-informed social actor analysis was undertaken, taking into account both the grammatical and socio-semantic categories that play a part in understanding how the children attribute agency in relation to the human and non-human characters in their narratives.

Key questions asked are:

- What do eco-narratives written by children reveal about their views and perceptions of human responsibility in relation to issues of environmental justice?
- How do pre-adolescent children attribute agency in the human and non-human characters in their eco-narratives?

Social actor representation analysis (van Leeuwen, 1995) is a useful method of linguistic analysis for addressing these questions because it provides insights into the various roles, actions and responsibilities that children perceive different groups of people (including themselves) as having in relation to the climate emergency.

The research findings reveal that adult human social actors are generally represented as actively doing things that have negative environmental consequences. However, some children incorporate family members into their stories, and they tend to perform more positive actions. Adult humans who are functionalised perform more positive actions than generic 'people', and those individualised through naming all have positive actions associated with them. Children as social actors are represented as rescuing, saving and enacting social and environmental justice. Findings also reveal that the social actors in the eco-narratives which are linguistically represented as passive and subjected to injustice are almost entirely non-human.

Examining the children's eco-narratives using social actor representation analysis can ultimately reveal some of the key ways in which the children understand the relationship between nature and ecological consciousness. The analysis uncovers how the children use language to convey their current awareness about the environment, climate change and different forms of ecological in/justice. We suggest that producing these or similar eco-narratives could also be adopted as a pedagogic storytelling practice that could ultimately be used more widely as a way for engaging wider groups of children in language and environmental justice education. It is also hoped that this exploratory work will have a significant impact in enabling researchers, language teachers and climate education practitioners to understand more about what young children find salient in creating their own eco-narratives.

Mapping Against the Grain. Safe Havens and the Politics of Translation in Antwerp's Red Star Line Museum

Anneleen Spiessens

This paper examines *Safe Haven/Thuishaven*, an outreach initiative of the Red Star Line Museum in Antwerp, as a **case study in participatory mapping and place-making**. Conceived to engage newcomers whose experiences resonate with the museum's historical migration narrative, the project invited participants to annotate a stripped-down city map with locations where they felt safe or "at home." The resulting archive—over 700 multimodal maps and a smaller number of oral testimonies—offers a unique lens on the lived realities of migration and the ways they **unsettle dominant narratives of citizenship and integration**.

Drawing on translation studies (Cronin & Simon, 2014; Inghilleri, 2017; Polezzi, 2012), migration studies (Bertacco & Vallorani, 2021; Radstone & Wilson, 2020), and urban theory (Çağlar & Glick Schiller, 2011; Yamamura, 2025), the paper interprets these maps as **acts of (self-)translation**. Framing human relocation as a form of translation, a perspective increasingly adopted in recent scholarship, foregrounds the cultural and linguistic adjustments migrants undertake to reconfigure their place in unfamiliar landscapes. Translation here is not a bounded technical skill but an ongoing, **existential condition at the heart of identity formation**. It is a recursive process through which individuals negotiate belonging, oscillating between heritage and host language, past and present, here and elsewhere. The city, in this view, emerges as both a *stage* for translation, marked by encounters and frictions, and a *product* of translation, continuously reshaped by the inscriptions of its inhabitants.

The analysis highlights two interrelated dimensions of translation in contexts of displacement:

1. Spatial and cultural translation

The maps illustrate how newcomers actively reconfigure Antwerp by inscribing their own spatial imaginaries, tracing geographies of belonging and exclusion. Far from being a static container, the city appears as a fluid and contested site where multiple affiliations intersect and transnational entanglements take shape. These cartographies often operate as "**counter-mappings**," **generating alternative spatial narratives that challenge normative representations and resist prescribed translational moves**.

2. Interlingual translation

Language acquisition functions not only as a communicative resource but as a key marker of integration, often assessed against societal expectations and embedded within hierarchical language regimes. The maps reveal how migrants navigate these dynamics, **exposing tensions between "desired language behavior" and the lived linguistic repertoires** that range from assimilation to translanguaging and strategic resistance. In this context, translation emerges as both necessity and choice: a practice shaped by asymmetrical power relations yet exercised with agency.

The paper concludes by reflecting on **the Red Star Line Museum's role as a translational mediator** that amplifies migrant voices and makes visible the hidden labor of (self-)translation. By inscribing these practices into the city's cultural memory, *Safe Haven* reframes migrants not as passive recipients of integration but as active city-makers whose translational work is central to imagining more inclusive urban futures.

Reconstructing Language Choice and Understanding in Multilingual Meetings at a Dutch University

Madison Steele & Jan D. ten Thije

Students and employees of universities in the Netherlands can make their voices heard by representing their peers in participatory bodies (*medezeggenschap*). However, when Dutch is the main language of administration, as universities in the Netherlands have agreed to uphold (Universiteiten van Nederland, 2025), international students and employees may be excluded from decision-making processes if their Dutch proficiency is not high. At the same time, communicating only through English as a lingua franca may discourage Dutch speakers from fully expressing themselves. One possible solution for addressing language policy in administrative meetings is to incorporate receptive multilingualism, whereby speakers use their preferred language while understanding the other language, such as one participant speaking Dutch and another responding in English. Receptive multilingualism is an example of an inclusive multilingual mode of communication (Backus et al., 2013) that aims for effective and flexible communication between linguistically diverse speakers. This study investigates the use of receptive multilingualism in actual meeting practices of participatory bodies at a Dutch university. A functional-pragmatic discourse analysis (Redder, 2008) is conducted to reconstruct the processes of planning and understanding utterances between meeting participants who speak different languages.

The data collection includes recordings of meetings in three participatory bodies over the course of one academic year, as well as semi-structured interviews with select meeting participants. Across the three bodies, native/advanced Dutch speakers outnumbered participants with lower Dutch proficiency. Two bodies used Dutch as the primary meeting language while one used primarily English. In all groups, several inclusive multilingual modes of communication were used throughout the meetings in interactions between Dutch-speaking and international, English-speaking participants. At the same time, the strategies used by speakers were influenced by their institutional roles and by the group's leading language policy. Analyzing these interactions through the lens of the speaker/hearer plan in receptive multilingual communication (Beerkens, 2010) offers insights into how participants make sense of what they hear and how they plan their responses in one language or the other. Supporting data from interviews with international members also shows how language policy and proficiency influence different ways of communicating in meetings. Overall, this study highlights the complexity of carrying out a multilingual language policy (e.g., Steele et al., 2025) in a just way so that Dutch and international university members alike can fully participate in meetings.

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Critical Corporeality: Integrating Ecolinguistics and Eco-Marxism

Sune Vork Steffensen

When wildfires consumed the town of Lytton, British Columbia in 2021, the words used to describe the catastrophe did not just reflect reality—they shaped how communities, governments, and individuals responded to the crisis. To grasp such linguistic dynamics, ecolinguistics has emerged as a transdisciplinary field that studies “the role of language in the life-sustaining interactions of humans, other species and the physical environment” (International Ecolinguistics Association, 2025).

In recent years, ecolinguistics has witnessed a “corporeal turn”—a fundamental shift toward studying the embodied-behavioural dimensions of language (Steffensen & Cowley, 2021), focusing less on textual and linguistic structures, and more on how they affect human behaviour in ways that have environmental consequences.

This presentation has two aims. First, it will demonstrate how the corporeal turn links the ecolinguistic agenda for developing critical language awareness with an eco-Marxist agenda. This theoretical integration allows ecolinguists to articulate how ecological injustice emerges from social inequalities. To do so, I argue that both language and social inequalities can be conceptualized by turning to the early Marx’s concept of *corporeal organisation* (Marx, 1998 [1845]) which thus provides a theoretical basis for integrating the two (Steffensen, 2025).

Second, it will demonstrate how this corporeal turn in ecolinguistics can be used for analytical and practical purposes, that is: (1) as a methodology for critically analysing how language interweaves with behaviour; and (2) as a method for raising critical awareness of how the corporeal organisation of capitalism gives rise to unjust asymmetries in the access to ecological resources for survival and wellbeing.

Why does this matter? I will argue that the corporeal turn adds theoretical coherence to how ecolinguistics addresses urgent environmental challenges. As our climate crisis intensifies, understanding how language works in and through a collective of bodies becomes essential for scaffolding the critical awareness of how language reflects and refracts the social and political structures that constitute the deep environmental injustices that haunt planet Earth.

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Europe's Trash, Morocco's Burden

Discourse and Coloniality in Morocco's Waste Import Debate

Hajar Taha

In 2016, Morocco faced a national controversy over the importation of thousands of tons of Italian waste, officially justified as “energy valorisation” within a circular economy framework. While government and industry actors presented the practice as a form of sustainable modernisation, activists and NGOs denounced it as a continuation of colonial dependency and ecological injustice. The episode illustrates how language and discourse shape public understandings of sustainability, responsibility, and justice. Within this framework, this paper is an attempt to unearth the competing discourses that emerged during the waste import debate, building on parliamentary statements, policy documents, media coverage, and activist campaigns. A critical discourse analysis will reveal how technocratic metaphors, such as “valorisation,” “modernisation,” and “resource recycling”, legitimised ecological risk. In contrast, activist and civil society voices reframed waste imports through the language of health, sovereignty, and environmental dignity, exposing the unequal distribution of risk between Europe and Morocco.

The analysis will further situate these discursive struggles within broader patterns of waste colonialism, where the Global North exports ecological harm to the Global South under the guise of sustainability. It argues that the metaphors and narratives mobilised in this case are not neutral but actively shape ecological imaginaries and policy directions. More significantly, the study will endeavour to foreground the importance of critical language awareness in uncovering greenwashing and amplifying justice-oriented perspectives by highlighting the tension between official and counter-discourses. The Moroccan case ultimately provides insight into how discourse mediates global inequalities and illustrates the transformative role of language in advancing ecological justice.

Critical Discourse Analysis of Green Claims in the Textile Industry

Guidelines for Uninformed Consumers

Agnese Ughetti

The European Commission's 2021 sweep report¹ revealed that 42% of analysed brand claims regarding sustainability were inflated, false, or misleading, with the *textiles*, *garments* and *shoes* sectors being the sectors of most concern. This high incidence of questionable marketing originates directly from the fundamental ambiguity surrounding the concept of sustainable fashion (Henninger et al. 2016). Since the concept has been and still is the focus of much debate, the lack of a single, clear definition is inherently problematic. This definitional void effectively leaves significant room for companies to make unsubstantiated claims about their practices and performance (Palm, 2023), thereby enabling the exaggeration and misdirection documented in the Commission's findings.

The communication of sustainable fashion heavily relies on 'eco-lexicon' (Thomas, 2008), a specialized lexicon featuring broad umbrella terms like *eco*, *green*, and *sustainability* used across media, brands, and institutions. Unfortunately, this language is often perceived by consumers as intentionally opaque, leading to confusion, uncertainty, and ultimately, a distrust of brands due to the questionable validity of vague green claims (Pearson-Smith & Evans, 2017). This ambiguity highlights how fashion companies' sustainability communication frequently results in greenwashing, which can be viewed as a form of discursive oppression. The inability of consumers to make fully informed, ethical consumption choices due to deliberately obscured information limits their access and agency, thereby upholding an unjust commercial status quo. To counter this systemic discursive oppression, the present research aims to investigate the specific green discourses mentioned or omitted, the legitimization strategies (Van Leeuwen, 2007) used and the underlying ideological choices.

This research, therefore, hypothesizes that the discursive construction of sustainability by dominant fashion brands actively naturalizes certain corporate structures of power by determining which topics become dominant and which are systematically ignored, thereby reinforcing consumer information inequality. To test this hypothesis the project employs Ecological Discourse Analysis (EDA) (Alexander & Stibbe, 2014), a powerful refinement of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 2013). This framework places special emphasis on how the exercise of power and propagation of ideology are implemented through language, particularly within the ecological domain. The methodology involves building a specialized, up-to-date corpus composed of press releases from major international fast-fashion and luxury brands. A combined quantitative analysis, using multipurpose tools like AntConc or CQPWeb, will establish key terminology and collocations, while the subsequent qualitative EDA will unpack the linguistic and rhetorical strategies used to persuade consumers and obfuscate corporate responsibility. By shedding light on how corporate discourse upholds inequalities in information access and transparency, this project aims at providing crucial guidelines to enable more just and emancipatory market engagements for consumers in the fashion sector.

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Sociolinguistic Dimensions of Social (In)justice: JEDI in the U.S. Presidential Inaugural Addresses (1961–2025)

Artur Urbaniak

This study examines the sociolinguistic dimensions of social (in)justice by analyzing the representation of traditionally marginalized groups in American presidential inaugural addresses from 1961 to 2025, i.e., from the inaugural address delivered by John Fitzgerald Kennedy to the latest one delivered by Donald Trump. Framed within the paradigm of *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)*—which has recently transformed into *Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI)*—the study situates its analysis within a broader reflection on how the notion of **justice** has become a foundation for **genuine inclusivity**.

Utilizing both **quantitative tools**—such as Voyant Tools for statistical analysis—and **qualitative methods**, including pragmatolinguistic analysis within the broader field of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the research investigates two primary objectives: (1) assessing the extent of attention afforded to marginalized communities—namely women, Indigenous peoples, African Americans, people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, economically disadvantaged populations, and individuals affected by substance abuse—and (2) identifying the political and legal directions proposed to address issues concerning these groups.

Deconstructing a total of seventeen inaugural speeches, this **interdisciplinary approach** aims to explore the complex interplay between presidential rhetoric and the societal positioning of historically marginalized communities. Situated within the broader linguistic landscape of U.S. political communication, the analysis reflects on the evolution of presidential rhetoric, observing transformations in inclusivity and the framing of social justice issues over the decades. The findings offer nuanced insights into the evolution of inclusive language within American political discourse, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of how presidential communication reflects and potentially influences the status of these groups in society.

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From the Ground Up: Grassroots Language Policy in Flemish Higher Education

Frank Van Splunder

Effective language management often emerges from the interaction between top-down and bottom-up approaches. While top-down policies are typically designed by governmental or institutional authorities, bottom-up initiatives arise from language users themselves, reflecting grassroots engagement and adaptation. In higher education, such grassroots policies often challenge dominant, monoglossic ideologies and advocate for the recognition and use of diverse languages, including minority languages, thereby fostering a more inclusive and multilingual academic environment.

This research focuses on Flanders, the Dutch-speaking region of Belgium, which enjoys considerable autonomy in educational and other matters. For example, Flanders has its own Ministry of Education, accountable only to the Flemish Government. Language policy in Flanders is rooted in a monolingual ideology that designates Dutch as the sole official language and medium of instruction. While strict legislation limits the use of other languages, English has become increasingly prominent as an academic lingua franca and as a language of instruction, thereby challenging the dominance of Dutch through emerging bilingual practices. For many Flemish lecturers and students, English now functions as a second language—or arguably their primary academic language. By contrast, French and, to a lesser extent, German—once central to Flemish higher education—have largely been reduced to the status of foreign languages. Moreover, growing social diversity has brought many additional languages into higher education. These minority languages, however, are rarely afforded the same prestige as Dutch and English; their use remains largely confined to the private sphere, despite official claims of support for multilingualism.

This paper examines bottom-up language policy in Flanders, focusing on the vision statement developed by the Dutch/Flemish Language Policy Platform (*Nederlands/Vlaams Platform Taalbeleid Hoger Onderwijs*), established in 2011. The 2025 vision statement is a grassroots policy document, produced through collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, including language policy organizations, lecturers, and students. While the vision statement reflects on language policy in both Flanders and the Netherlands, the focus of this presentation is on Flanders only. By engaging constructively with top-down stakeholders, the Platform was able to produce a vision statement both grounded in local realities and aligned with broader institutional frameworks.

The paper argues that language policy should not be left exclusively to politicians and administrators, whose decisions are often guided by political and economic considerations. Instead, grassroots organizations play a crucial role in ensuring that policies respond to the realities of a multilingual society. A balanced approach—integrating top-down and bottom-up strategies and fostering collaboration and trust among all

stakeholders—offers the most promising path towards inclusive and effective language policy in Flemish higher education.

Towards an Ecopoetics of Ambiguity; Rethinking Environmental Mourning at the Crossroads of Hope and Hopelessness

Merlijn Verduin

Long Island, 1969. Susan Sontag identifies a lifeless body as that of her longtime friend and self-proclaimed “double” Susan Taubes, who ended her life by drowning herself in the Atlantic Ocean. After fleeing Hungary due to the looming threat of Nazism, Taubes stranded in the United States, building an academic career while intellectually and existentially hovering between despair and longing. Tragically, Taubes died as she had lived, torn between America and Europe, estranged and alienated from her lifeworld and *her-self*.

Taubes’ writings offer a long-neglected yet particularly topical prism through which to analyse contemporary expressions of ecological grief related to climate change. Ecological grief, or eco-grief, refers to the profound sense of loss felt in response to both the experience and anticipation of climate change and prolonged environmental degradation. The feelings of anxiety, despair, anger and grief, evoked by present-day ecological crises and vulnerabilities, are increasingly manifested globally and locally in the artistic, scientific and cultural spheres. Importantly, dominant discourses tend to lean towards opposite frameworks, either advocating tech-invoked optimism or apocalyptic pessimism. Similar to contemporary, currently underrepresented expressions of environmental estrangement and place-bound mourning, Taubes’ ideas on the gradual disordance of natural habitats and entanglements articulate the attempt to strike a balance between hope and hopelessness. As environmental degradation continues to unfold, Taubes’ thought can offer a much-needed perspective for rethinking the thought binary between optimism and pessimism.

By analysing Taubes’ philosophical *pathos* against the backdrop of present-day climate change, this paper aims to offer an interdisciplinary tool to engage with the question how ecological mourning, as a form of artistic activism, can form a meaningful response to prolonged environmental degradation and more-than-human loss. This tool could aid in allowing us to make sense of converging more-than-human crises and their imaginaries and narratives, thereby resisting dominant binaries and offering a framework which enables us to respond to the questions accompanying our current ecological situation. To illustrate this potential, the paper will juxtapose and scrutinize this view against Rachael Allen’s *God Complex*, a contemporary narrative poem on the breakdown of relationships against the backdrop of environmental degradation. By arguing how the synthesis of hopelessness and hope can offer a path forward amidst ecological violence, the paper aims to foster ideas of solidarity and inclusion between human and more-than-human lifeforms.

Are Flemish Students Open to Gender-Inclusive Language in Their Foreign Language?

Hanne Verhaegen & Laura Robaey

The pursuit of gender-inclusive language (GIL) has a long tradition, but it also provokes resistance (Meuleneers, 2024). Language attitudes evolve in a globalised, multilingual context in which not only native speakers but also second language learners contribute to language use and ideology (Truan, 2024). That is why research is increasingly focusing on the specific attitudes of second language learners towards GIL. While some authors consider GIL to be an obstacle to language learning (Krome, 2022), others emphasise the importance of making language learners aware of its existence and addressing it explicitly in courses (Peuschel, 2022).

In this study, we focus on the attitudes of foreign language learners of German towards GIL, with specific attention to students in language, communication, and business programmes at higher education institutions in Flanders. To map their attitudes, we analyse surveys (with both closed- and open-ended questions; $n = 154$) and in-depth interviews using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2022) ($n = 6$). We examine, among other aspects, learners' familiarity with gender-inclusive forms, their attitudes and willingness to use them, and their experiences with their written and oral application.

Preliminary results indicate that familiarity with GIL in German is high among the students surveyed, although it is limited to certain written forms; the use of the forms for oral application is less well known. In addition, learners hold generally positive attitudes towards GIL in German, and show willingness to use GIL in German themselves for reasons of inclusion, although some find it cognitively demanding. This study is the first to map attitudes towards GIL in a foreign language in the Flemish context. The results will be presented in detail, with particular attention being paid to the translation of the findings into recommendations for educational practice.

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Media Representations of the Banda Genocide and Jan Pieterzoon Coen in Indonesian and Dutch Newspapers (1970-2025)

Ulrike Vogl & Maria Nikijuluw

This study examines how historical injustice is linguistically constructed and negotiated in media representations of the 1621 Banda genocide and Jan Pieterszoon Coen, Governor-General of the Dutch East India Company. The Banda Islands, known for their natural beauty and spice wealth, were also the site of one of the most violent colonial massacres in Southeast Asia. Coen is widely regarded as directly responsible, having ordered the genocide's execution. Yet, the genocide has remained largely silenced or selectively remembered in both Indonesian and Dutch public discourse. This research investigates how that silence is sustained, disrupted, and recontextualized through the language of news media.

Using a discourse-historical approach (Wodak, 2015) and corpus-assisted analysis, the study integrates data from *Kompas* (Indonesia) and *NRC Handelsblad* (Netherlands). Texts were collected from digital archives, divided into two periods (1970-1999; 2000-2025), and analyzed using AntConc (3.5.9) to identify collocations, concordances, and thematic patterns associated with *genocide*, *Coen*, and *Banda/Bandaneze*. The comparative framework allows tracing how both national contexts frame colonial atrocity through euphemism, or moral re-evaluation, revealing how linguistic choices encode broader discourses of (in)justice.

In *Kompas*, findings show that before 2003, coverage focused on J.P. Coen as the founder of Batavia, omitting references to the Banda genocide. The event first appeared explicitly in 2003 with neutral historical framing, while the term *genosida* ("genocide") emerged only in 2005. Lexical frequencies indicate a gradual shift from descriptive to moralized language: *pembantaian* ("massacre," 36 times), *pembunuhan* ("murder," 6), and *genosida* (7). Victims were referred to by social categories *orang kaya Banda* ("wealthy Bandanese"), *tokoh Banda* ("leaders"), which individualize and depoliticize the violence. These patterns suggest a long-standing discursive silence shaped by postcolonial historiography and media neutrality norms.

In contrast, the Dutch corpus reveals a more complex negotiation between denial, commemoration, and critique. For the period of 1970-1999, the search in *NRC Handelsblad* showed no co-occurrence of "Banda" and "genocide," while post-2000 to 2025 data indicate a marked increase: 32 references to *Banda* alongside *genocide*, and 13 co-occurrences of *genocide* with *1621*. Collocations of *Coen* with *herdenken* ("commemorate"), *standbeeld* ("statue"), (the Dutch city of) *Hoorn* (which hosts a statue of JP Coen since 1893), *held* ("hero"), *omstreden* ("controversial") show a discursive tension between pride and moral discomfort. Mentions of *Bandanezen* ("Bandanese") appear mostly in passive constructions, linked to trade or numbers (*duizenden*, "thousands"), erasing agency and foregrounding economic narratives. However, since

2010, vocabulary such as *debat* (“debate”), *discussie* (“discussion”), and *opinie* (“opinion”) signals a growing moral reflexivity, particularly amid national debates on slavery and colonial responsibility.

Together, these findings reveal contrasting yet interconnected discourses of injustice. Indonesian media exhibit discursive absence, reflecting national silences around colonial trauma, while Dutch media demonstrate discursive ambivalence, fluctuating between acknowledgement and avoidance. Language thus emerges as a site where historical accountability is both constrained and reconceptualized. By examining the linguistic framing of genocide in postcolonial contexts, this study reveals how discourse both sustains and challenges historical injustice, highlighting the ethical responsibility of language in shaping collective memory and advancing social justice.

Narratives of Social and Ecological Transformation

The Case of France between 1980 and 2020

Albin Wagener

The aim of the present contribution is to expose the results of a study conducted for the French national agency for ecological transition (ADEME) in 2024/2025, regarding the way initiatives have been creating and spreading out narratives of social and ecological transformation. During this study, a corpus has been structured by gathering texts written by initiatives themselves (presentations, official communication), by institutional or public partners (funders, NGOs, etc.) and published in the press, especially in local journals.

In order to conduct this study, a total of 559 national initiatives have been chosen and isolated, insofar as they do produce narratives that really spread out within local communities and even find some echo nationally and inter-regionally. These initiatives are quite varied: it can be cooperatives, associations, companies or public actors (cities for instance), and their actions can focus on a sheer diversity of topics and activities (tourism, social innovation, biodiversity preservaiton, circular economy, housing, etc.). The goal of this project has also been to involve ultramarine territories, which are unfortunately regularly kept aside when it comes to ecological change, although they are particularly vulnerable and regroup a lot of environmental initiatives, often based on indigenous knowledge.

This corpus has been analyzed using lexicometric analysis and ecolinguistic discourse studies, and the results show that the variety of initiatives revolve around three main narrative topics. The first one implies a strong link to local regions and territories, which also describes how communities make sense of local attachment by mobilizing discourses of identity. The second one explains how people engage into this initiatives in order to strengthen social relationships and create moments of conviviality, which seems to imply some sort of cultural feature. The last one shows that every initiative is about accompanying social and cultural change in terms of practices but also viewpoints and representations- thus showing that social and ecological transformation is not only about technical choices and solutions, but also about cultural sets of habits that need to make sense for communities.

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Inclusion or Political Correctness?

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Euphemistic Expressions towards Disability

Berhanu Asfaw Weldemikael

Public discourse on disability is predominantly framed by the principles of inclusion and exclusion, centering on the imperative of equal access for all. In pursuit of this goal, politicians, media figures, and institutions often adopt a carefully curated, euphemistic lexicon when referring to individuals with disabilities. This linguistic practice, aimed at signaling inclusivity and maintaining socio-political correctness, is a global phenomenon observed in contexts ranging from Western media to public life in Ethiopia. Similarly, academic research on disability frequently employs a sanitized vocabulary, often avoiding direct or dictionary-standard terms. While this euphemistic framing is ostensibly employed to foster inclusion, its actual reception by the disability community remains ambiguous and critically unexamined. The central question persists: are these well-intentioned linguistic accommodations perceived as genuine steps toward inclusion, or are they interpreted as a form of condescension or even mockery? This ambiguity forms the central problem this study seeks to address. Taking this discrepancy between intent and perception as its point of departure, this research aims to investigate the preferences and perceptions of individuals with disabilities in Ethiopia regarding their own linguistic designation. The study positions itself within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), specifically employing Fairclough's three-dimensional model, to interrogate how language shapes, and is shaped by, power dynamics and social structures. Methodologically, the study adopted a two-stage descriptive design within a qualitative paradigm. The first stage involved compiling a corpus of frequently used euphemistic expressions for disability, gathered from a systematic review of Ethiopian media reports. In the second stage, this compiled list was distributed as a questionnaire to individuals with disabilities to elicit their perceptions of each term. To garner deeper, nuanced insights, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were subsequently conducted with a purposefully selected group of participants.

The data, analyzed through thematic categorization, yield preliminary findings that reveal a complex and somewhat paradoxical consensus. A significant majority of informants did not view euphemistic expressions as authentic tools of inclusion. Instead, they perceived them as creating a distorted representation of their realities in the public sphere, effectively masking the true nature of their lived experiences. However, in a striking contradiction, participants expressed a clear preference for these very euphemisms over direct dictionary terms. This preference is rooted in the profoundly negative social connotations, stigma, and historical baggage associated with the literal terminology. Thus, the community is caught in a linguistic dilemma: rejecting the disingenuous nature of euphemisms while simultaneously relying on them as a necessary shield against the overt prejudice embedded in conventional language.

Retelling Flight Paths

Alternative Imaginaries of Aviation in Surinamese Postcolonial Literature

Simone Wiegman

This paper examines how aviation is represented, contested, and reimagined in cultural and literary contexts, with a particular focus on Surinamese postcolonial literature. It starts from the premise that technological innovation alone cannot mitigate aviation's climate impact. The dominant cultural imaginary of flying must also be critically addressed. An image that appears to be historically rooted in colonialism and is still associated with privilege, exclusivity, and glamour. The guiding question is: in what ways could postcolonial Surinamese literature, specifically Edgar Cairo's *Dat Vuur* (1982) and Astrid Roemer's *Lijken op liefde* (1997), contribute to reimagining aviation through more socially and ecologically sustainable perspectives?

The urgency of this inquiry lies in aviation's disproportionate climate impact. Despite promises of sustainable fuels, rising passenger numbers negate potential gains (Gössling & Humpe, 2023, p. 6). Aviation emissions represent both social and ecological injustice. Since the 1980s, air travel has reinforced existing mobility inequalities, becoming accessible to some while remaining unattainable for most (Toivanen, 2021, p. 600). Just 1% of the global population accounts for 50% of aviation emissions, while 90% does not fly annually (Gössling & Humpe, 2020, pp. 1, 7–8). The effects of the climate crisis are disproportionately felt by the latter 90%, illustrating how aviation entrenches both ecological and social injustice. Technological measures are insufficient without reconfiguring aviation's cultural image in ways that support degrowth.

Aviation's current image is deeply historical, tied since its early days to empire and representing colonizers' mobility as superior (Bhimull, 2017, p. 148; Toivanen, 2021, p. 599; Vanspauwen & Sánchez-Fuarros, 2025, p. 1). Colonial connotations pervaded aviation marketing, for example with exoticized images of Indonesian women. Today, airlines continue to cultivate exclusivity and luxury through elite frequent flyer programs and in-flight magazines. The dominance of this framing has silenced marginalized perspectives (Zuskáčová, 2020, p. 17). Postcolonial literature could be a valuable source for finding those voices.

Although aviation has increasingly appeared in fiction, many authors, migrant writers included, omit explicit depictions of flight or airports, perhaps reflecting its normalization in modern life (Durante, 2020, p. 10; Toivanen, 2021, p. 599; Toivanen, 2025, p. 36). However, some Surinamese literature seems to offer a notable counterpoint. In Cairo's *Dat Vuur* (1982) the protagonist observes airplanes flying over his neighborhood, emphasizing their role as transportation for the wealthy looking down on the people on the ground. Alternatively, when he flies himself, it is a vehicle of escape from state authority (Cairo, 1982, pp. 79, 455). Roemer's *Lijken op liefde* foregrounds aviation through flight details introducing each chapter (Roemer, 1997). This is remarkable given Roemer's personal dislike for flying (Elibol, 2025, p. 48).

These representations suggest that, in a Surinamese postcolonial context, aviation is neither invisible nor merely glamorous. Instead, this paper wishes to investigate whether it can emerge as a site for rethinking mobility, privilege, and belonging. By bringing aeromobility studies into dialogue with postcolonial literature, this paper thus argues that Surinamese narratives may open pathways to alternative imaginaries of aviation. Images that could be capable of unsettling dominant Western imaginaries and contribute to debates on aviation justice.

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Mrs. Rabbit, Mr. Rabbit, or Just Rabbit? A Study on Gender and Gender Stereotyping in Animal Characters in Children's Books

Linde Wille

This study analyses a corpus of 54 originally Dutch-language children's books featuring exclusively animal characters. In the first phase, the relationships between different gender identities are examined, as well as the linguistic and visual strategies used to represent characters as female or male, and the strategies employed to portray characters in a neutral way. The second part investigates whether there is a correlation between the grammatical gender of the animal and the gender assigned to the animal character in the story. In addition, the study explores which gender stereotypes appear in both the textual and visual components of the books, and whether there are examples that challenge these stereotypes. Finally, the study examines whether the author's gender influences the gender of the main character and the characters in general.

The analysis shows that male characters clearly dominate within the corpus, and that explicitly non-binary identities are completely absent. Gender is primarily constructed through linguistic means, with illustrations serving as a supporting factor. Neutral characters generally remain neutral through the avoidance of pronouns and gender-specific names. There is a partial correlation between the grammatical gender of the animal and the assigned gender, although this correlation is not absolute. Gender stereotypes are also present in books featuring exclusively animal characters, albeit to a lesser extent. The author's gender appears to have an influence mainly among male authors, who tend to write about male protagonists more often. Among female authors, male dominance remains evident despite their own gender identity.

The aim of this study is to raise awareness among teachers, parents, education professionals, authors, illustrators, and publishers of these findings, so that they can take them into account in future choices and representations within children's literature.

Student Perceptions of Accent Bias and Accent Anxiety

Mira Wyna, Chloé Lybaert & Sarah Van Hoof

Flemish higher education is characterised by considerable linguistic diversity. The student population has become increasingly heterogeneous in terms of nationalities and mother tongues, which had led to a wide range of foreign-accented speech. In addition, many students have regional accents in Dutch, the local language. International research has shown that such non-standard accents can give rise to bias in domains such as recruitment (e.g. Spence et al., 2024) and housing (e.g. Massey & Lundy, 2001). Recent studies in the United Kingdom (Levon et al., 2022; Tomé Lourido & Snell, 2025) and Germany (Lorenz et al., 2024) demonstrate that students speaking with foreign and regional accents also experience accent bias in educational settings. This includes being called on less frequently by their teachers and receiving lower grades. Moreover, participants reported experiencing accent anxiety, i.e. feelings of insecurity that undermine their self-confidence and discourage them from speaking in class.

In Flanders, however, accent bias in educational settings remains underexplored. To address this empirical gap, we distributed a survey across higher education students among different study types and study fields. The study had two main aims: (1) to examine the extent to which these groups experience accent bias and accent anxiety, and (2) to examine how these experiences are influenced by ethnicity, regional background, socio-economic status (SES) and type of education. The questionnaire addressed participants' language use, experiences of accent bias and accent anxiety, measured through, among others, Likert-scale statements.

The study puts forward the following hypotheses. First, given that international research in other contexts has shown that accent bias vis-à-vis foreign (Lx) accents is stronger than vis-à-vis regional accents (e.g. Spence et al., 2024), we expect Lx speakers to report more bias and higher accent anxiety than L1 speakers. Second, based on research on discrimination in education (e.g. D'hondt et al., 2021; D'hondt et al., 2024), we expect students of European descent to report lower levels of bias and anxiety than those of non-European descent. Third, since non-standard speech is often linked to lower SES, low-SES speakers are likely to report more encounters with accent bias and greater levels of accent anxiety than high-SES speakers. Finally, considering the traditional association of standard language with educatedness and academic contexts (Impe & Speelman 2007), we expect students in more practically oriented study programmes to report fewer experiences of bias and anxiety than students in more academically oriented programmes.

At the time of writing, the survey is still being distributed. However, the results will be available by the time of the CLADES conference.

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Heritage Maintenance Beyond Mandarin in the Chinese Diaspora: Superdiversity, Contested Chineseness, and Sanctuary from Homeland Repression

Mahn Hei Yu

Recent heritage language research highlights the current superdiversity, defined as the diaspora's complex intersection of dialect and migration backgrounds, among the Chinese diaspora in Western countries through linguistic ethnographies of Chinatown communities and the deconstruction and critique of the traditional notion of "Chineseness" as a homogeneous ethnolinguistic identity (Chen and Wang, 2023; Huang, 2018). Although 47% of Chinese Canadians report a non-Mandarin mother tongue (Census 2021), regional Chinese languages are significantly undervalued and underrepresented in heritage language schools (Curd-Christiansen, 2006; Chow, 2018). These patterns illustrate both the hegemony of Mandarin (Leung & Wu, 2022) and the contested discourses and experiences of speakers of regional Chinese languages that further characterizes the superdiversity of Chinese Canadians.

I will be presenting my study, which investigates the experiences of second-generation and 1.5 generation Chinese Canadians whose families speak regional Chinese languages. It adopts a mixed-methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2023) that combines structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with 21 participants recruited from a western Canadian university. Questionnaire and interview transcripts were analyzed thematically under Terry et al.'s (2017) six-phase model and a sequential exploratory approach and five interpretive profiles will be presented, each capturing distinct constellations of cultural and ideological affiliations and linguistic trajectory, ranging from those who identify strongly as Chinese and have shifted to Mandarin, to those who maintain regional languages and identify strongly with regional identities. These profiles also challenge the presumed correlation between cultural identity and language retention as some participants who strongly identified as "Chinese" also maintained their regional languages extensively while others who strongly identified with regional identities still struggled to maintain their family's languages.

The study then identifies important factors supporting regional language maintenance which will be also presented: 1) participant and family's emotional salience towards the importance of regional language and identity alignment towards it 2) family's strong intergenerational transmission desires and efforts 3) cultural and educational support towards more domains of usage such as community events and family and peer networks. Conversely, maintenance is undermined by: 1) lack of educational resources 2) societal ideologies that frame Mandarin as the legitimate Chinese language and regional languages as inferior "dialects" 3) internalization of the aforementioned linguistic hierarchies.

Another important theme in the findings that will also be presented is how diaspora contexts and host countries for immigrants can act as sanctuaries from repression in the homeland. Participants recounted how family members in China, Singapore, and Taiwan during the authoritarian era faced formal and informal punishments for using regional languages, due to dominant state ideologies of “one nation, one language” (Zhou, 2000; Huang & Cheng, 2016). In contrast, diaspora spaces in Canada, such as Cantonese-speaking communities in cosmopolitan locations such as Vancouver or emerging language programs (Duff et al., 2012; Lai, 2010) offer both grassroot and institutional pathways for community members to reclaim their language and heritage that has been increasingly marginalized in the homeland. The presentation will include notable examples of participants whose family’s migration to Canada and engagement in the diaspora community has counterintuitively aided in the preservation of their regional language, and demonstrates a convincing and significant positive outcome of multicultural and heritage language programs as sites of language and social justice by creating the very opportunities for inclusion and representation that were denied in the immigrants’ homeland.

Political Discourses of Extractivism in the Northern Netherlands and Institutional Learning Across a Decade

Aziza Zijlstra

Extractive activities like gas extraction and other forms of mining are highly contested. In contexts of extractivism, institutional actors often employ discourse to justify their decision-making processes. This research examines how the Dutch government uses discursive strategies to shape understandings of gas extraction over time, focusing on whether and how these discourses have contributed to the perpetuation of social injustices.

In the north of the Netherlands, gas is extracted from multiple fields. Starting with the discovery and exploitation of the largest gas field of Europe underneath the province of Groningen in 1959, other so-called ‘small gas fields’ have also been, or are being, exploited. The government stated in 2023 they would cease gas extraction in the province of Groningen due to the severe consequences of extraction from the large Groningen field. These include thousands of earthquakes, damaged and unsafe houses, soil subsidence, and reduced mental health of residents. These impacts occurred gradually and worsened over time. The issues were long denied by the operator and the government, and once repair procedures were set up, citizens ended up in over a decade of ‘administrative limbo’ trying to get their houses repaired and reinforced. A parliamentary inquiry committee concluded in 2023 that the government made decisions at the expense of residents for decades and that the government owed a debt of honor to Groningen. All of this culminated in the closure of the Groningen gas field in 2024. Despite protest from civil society, local government and the state supervisor, small fields in the same area are still being exploited by the same operator, permits are being renewed, and new permits are given out to exploit additional locations.

Several discourses (e.g. risk, safety, energy security) have been deployed to steer decision-making to favor extraction of the Groningen gas field. Our preliminary findings suggest that these same discourses are being utilized in discussions about the smaller fields. By applying Critical Discourse Analysis to key policy documents of the Dutch national government from both 2012 (when the largest earthquake to date (M3.6) drew attention to the Groningen gas field) and 2025, the development of discursive strategies surrounding the Groningen gas field and the smaller fields are compared.

This research is relevant because residents’ experiences with the impact of the Groningen gas field are intertwined with their concerns regarding small gas fields. In the case of extraction from the Groningen gas field, citizens’ concerns were dismissed, while at a later stage the government conceded that citizens had been right all along. The question arises whether the government is learning from the harsh conclusions of the parliamentary inquiry. In fact, discursive practices used by the government seem to be designed to present the consequences of the Groningen gas field extraction as a one-off situation. This research offers insight into how discursive strategies can be used by governments to maintain and build power structures and ideologies, possibly at the detriment of society.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES

Screening of the documentary “Duty of care: The climate trials”

Duty of Care: The Climate Trials is a compelling documentary from Belgium that follows the groundbreaking legal battles led by Dutch lawyer Roger Cox to hold governments and major oil companies legally accountable for climate inaction. Through court footage and expert interviews, the film shows how Cox’s cases – including those against the Dutch government and Shell – helped establish the principle that states and corporations owe a “duty of care” to protect citizens and future generations from the devastating effects of climate change. The 56-minute documentary, directed by Nic Balthazar, blends courtroom drama with global climate advocacy, highlighting how legal strategies are becoming a powerful tool in the fight for climate justice. *Duty of Care* inspires reflection on law, responsibility and climate action.

Screening of the documentary “Woord x Macht x Strijd” with Jan Blommaert

Woord x Macht x Strijd is a 50-minute web documentary that reflects on the life, work and ideas of the Belgian sociolinguist and public intellectual Jan Blommaert. The film was created by Docwerkers together with a network of collaborators as a tribute after Blommaert announced he had terminal cancer, capturing extended conversations about language, power, and inequality. Against the backdrop of his own academic and activist career, Blommaert discusses how language shapes society and education, the role of public scholarship in social change, and the struggles against right-wing movements, while also highlighting hope, resistance and collective action. The result is both a masterclass in critical thinking and a personal testament to the social relevance of scholarship.