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Framing nature: discourses past and present of nature and the environment
A sustainability perspective

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Title of the paper presented:
Framing Environmental Commitment on the International Stage: Chinese and German
Political Discourse on Climate Change

Abstract:
As a topic that has come to occupy a growingly central role in contemporary society, public discourse on climate change has been widely investigated from different perspectives (e.g., Sedlaczek, 2014; Marinelli, 2018). Less attention, however, appears to have been devoted to linguistic contrastive analyses of discourses on the subject. Given the global relevance of this complex and multifaceted phenomenon, it seems reasonable to posit that, in international or intergovernmental settings, different countries may construct different narratives of their environmental commitment, also because of divergent views on the policies to be enacted and the (perceived) status of each country on the international stage.

This paper aims to investigate how narratives on climate change are constructed in Chinese and German sources, two distant lingua-cultures. Drawing on the theoretical and methodological frameworks of critical discourse analysis and frame analysis (Entman, 1993; Reese, 2007; Reisigl and Wodak, 2009), it provides a contrastive analysis of two corpora (Chinese and German) of official public speeches and statements by the political leaders (or their representatives) of the People's Republic of China and Germany in the context, for instance, of international summits and conferences, as those organised within the framework of the United Nations. Firstly, the analysis adopts an inductive approach to identify the frames emerging from the ways information is presented in the texts from the two corpora, especially with regard to the narrative that each country constructs on its commitment to facing climate change. Secondly, the morpho-syntactic, lexical means and rhetorical devices that concur to activate these frames are examined and compared.

The results are expected to contribute to the understanding of the different discursive strategies employed by the governments of China and Germany to represent their conduct in this critical field, which carries major implications for image-building and the gathering of political consensus, both domestically and internationally.

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