

Framing environmental action in corporate communication

Venue changed to
B5-208, YEUNG!

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Abstract

The talk examines how environmental action is linguistically framed in corporate communication, focusing on variation across organizations. Using transport companies—and railway operators in particular—as a case study, we explore how ESG narratives foreground corporate awareness of both social responsibility and environmental impact. Anchored in framing theory (e.g., issue framing and problem–solution schemata), we show how recurrent phraseological patterns and lexical framings (e.g., zero, protection) instantiate two dominant macro-frames of corporate identity: **efficiency** (optimization, risk mitigation, metrics) and **care** (stewardship, protection, responsibility). Methodologically, the study combines keyword analysis, collocation and concordance work, and the analysis of lexical bundles and semantic prosody to map recurrent framing resources across genres (reports, websites, social media). We also analyze future-oriented expressions to track variation in commissive vs predictive uses, as well as vagueness markers that calibrate commitment and manage reputational risk. Findings show that the efficiency–care tension functions as a key discursive parameter in corporate identity construction, shaped by organizational culture, institutional context, and audience design. The study demonstrates the value of corpus-assisted methods for uncovering framing choices in ESG communication.

Speaker

Marina Bondi is Professor of English Linguistics at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy. Founding Director of the *CLAVIER* centre (*Corpus and Language Variation In English Research*), she has published extensively in the field of genre analysis, EAP and corpus linguistics, with a focus on language variation across genres, disciplines and cultures. Her publications appeared in international journals such as *Pragmatics*, *IJBC*, *Journal of Pragmatics*, *Written Communication*, *IEEE Transactions in Professional Communication*, *Discourse Context & Media*, *Lingua* etc. She is Co-Editor of *ESP* journal. Her recent interest centres on knowledge dissemination and the impact of digital media on specialized discourse.

Date: 22 April 2026 (Wednesday)

Time: 5:00pm HKT

Venue: B5-208, 5/F, Yeung Kin Man Academic Building, City University of Hong Kong

Announcement of teaching and research activities with Italian partners will be made after the seminar.



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