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# Going Green with... Communication

## A Comparative Analysis of Opposing Campaigns

### Abstract

*In tune with rapidly increasing environmental awareness, terms like sustainability and eco-friendly frequently occur and are exploited in discourse domains from supermarket advertising to corporate communication. In contrast to these discursive simulations of concern, Greenpeace (GP) activists have consistently used peaceful protests as a means to protect our planet. GP's campaigns are designed to raise questions, to make people rethink the way they live and (ab)use the Earth's environment, and, ultimately, to engage volunteers and raise funds. In a different vein, Gazprom (GZM) also attempts to advertise its corporate image and its mission to distribute gas through powerful technology, connecting entire continents through a grid of pipelines and ships, 'energising' anything from industrial plants to gas stoves in apartments and small cottages. The aim of this study is to analyse aspects of both GZM's and GP's modes of advertising their goals, particularly the multi-layered composition of their online videos, using a multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis approach from an ecolinguistic perspective. Both GZM and GP exemplify a tendency to "promotionalisation," sharing the same codes and rhetoric strategies in a variety of advertising campaigns. Unpredictably enough, both utilise 'green-speaking' multimodally. The implications of these striking similarities are discussed.*

**Keywords:** *Greenpeace campaigns, Gazprom, greenspeak, promotionalisation, multimodal critical discourse analysis, ecolinguistics*

### 1. Introduction and aims

Over the past century, biodiversity has been declining due to a variety of stressors. Urbanisation/industrialisation, carbon sequestration, greenhouse gases, pollution, global warming, and water issues—to list but a few—are among those stresses affecting how and where fauna, flora and human beings live and reproduce. Accordingly, terms like *sustainability* and *eco-friendly* have become today's buzzwords and are (often craftily) exploited in all discourse domains, from supermarket advertising to corporate communication (Cox 2012), from the news media, story-telling, video-narratives or social media platforms to specialised scientific literature and essays.

Multimodal narratives, like all texts, are “discursive constructions of some world [... and employ] strategies which foreground the speech act of offering values and beliefs” (van Dijk 1997; Fowler 1991, 208-209). Predictably, in corporate communication campaigns/propaganda, social cognition issues, which are grounded in discourse/power relationships related to geopolitical issues, are at stake.

By contrast, with the increasingly numerous discursive simulations of concern, Greenpeace (GP) activists, whose genuine compassion for the Earth’s environment was at the origin of their movement in 1971, have consistently used non-violent protests as a means to protect our planet. GP’s campaigns are designed to spread information and raise people’s consciousness about green topics such as climate change or plastic pollution in order to prevent some actions and enable others, including engaging volunteers and raising funds.

Although somehow controversial and different in their targets, all GP’s colourful campaigns, which are also advertised in hundreds of videos, aim to gain social esteem and consensus and make people rethink the way they live and (ab)use the environment. Such positioning, on a different plane, reflects the theoretical stance of ecolinguistics (see Section 4.2).

In a different vein, Gazprom (GZM)—the world’s leading gas producer—also attempts to advertise its corporate image and its mission, which is to distribute gas through powerful technology, connecting an entire continent and beyond, through a grid of pipelines and ships, ‘energising’ anything from industrial plants to gas stoves in apartments and small cottages. The engagement of GZM in advertising is predictably less consistent and pervasive as compared with GP’s approach to communication, given the need of the latter to gain individual supporters (and funds) from all over the world, whereas GZM buyers (mainly national governments) do not need that kind of ethically-grounded persuasion. Nonetheless, even though their missions and visions are radically different, both GP and GZP videos are meant to convey, to different extents, their ‘green’ messages.

The aim of this study is to analyse aspects of both GZM’s and GP’s modes of advertising their goals, by comparing GZM’s ‘About Gazprom’ self-promotional video (2016), and GP’s ‘Save the Arctic’ video (2015), disseminated both through their official websites and YouTube (see 5.1 and 5.2), where the similarities between GP and GZM communication modes are remarkable. Unpredictably enough, both campaigns exemplify a tendency of “promotionalisation” (Bhatia 2004; 2002), where the same codes and rhetoric strategies are shared.<sup>1</sup> Such similarities, which

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<sup>1</sup> Overall, the strategies which are at work in such videos are also utilized to some extent by many of the companies that GP strongly opposes, including Lego, Shell, Nestle.

are repeatedly found across both the audiovisual and verbal codes, make the two videos eligible for comparison.

In order to deal with such complex issues as the interaction between GP's high impact ecological campaigns, GZM's attempts to promote its corporate image, and their multimedia/multimodal representations, a broad multimodal critical discourse analysis (MCDA) approach seemed appropriate. The multi-layered composition of their online videos will also be investigated through the additional lens of ecolinguistics.

## 2. Presenting Greenpeace and Gazprom

Greenpeace set forth in 1971 with “a trip for life, and for peace” motto, in the words of Irving Stowe, one of its co-founders. More specifically, the GP story began with a quirky alliance of Quakers, pacifists, ecologists, journalists and hippies who had raised money with a rock concert featuring James Taylor as a special guest for a mission aiming to stop US nuclear weapons testing on Amchitka Island. On 15th September 1971, the group, fearing nuclear bombs would trigger devastating earthquakes and tsunamis in a place that was home to endangered species, set sail for Amchitka from Vancouver and, from an old fishing boat, they called CBC radio and made a statement: “We call our ship the Greenpeace because that’s the best name we can think of to join the two great issues of our times, the survival of our environment and the peace of the world.”<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding the many difficulties encountered during the journey, five months after the start of the group’s mission, the US abandoned its nuclear testing grounds, which were later declared a bird sanctuary. Throughout the 1970s, GP continued campaigning on various environmental issues, including commercial whaling and toxic waste, and spread to several countries. In 1979, Greenpeace International was formed and has since gradually developed into an active network of independent national and regional organisations, today distributed globally across 55 countries.

GP campaigns across the globe prioritise environmental protection and sustainable development (ranging from deforestation to the deterioration of oceans, from commercial whaling to plastic pollution, from toxic waste to the avoidance of single-use plastics) with large-scale action against some of the world’s largest corporations, including Lego, Shell, Gazprom, Volkswagen, Adidas, Mattel and Nestle. Within the Greenpeace *Save the Arctic* campaign, both Lego—over its partnership with the oil corporation Shell, which continued to drill in the Arctic—

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<sup>2</sup> For more on the history of Greenpeace, see <https://www.greenpeace.org/eastasia/history/>. All websites were last visited on 13/12/2021.

and Gazprom have been targeted.<sup>3</sup> Famous brands such as Burberry, Primark, Adidas and Mattel have also been targeted to try to push them into a commitment against hazardous chemicals as well as paper and plastic packaging. GP's many successful campaigns to promote the adoption of environmentally friendly behaviours and to tackle climate-related risks, though not free from a range of controversies, have proven so influential that they have contributed, for example, to the adoption of the Kyoto and, subsequently, Cartagena Protocols. GP's communication modes are essential for both promoting action and fundraising, therefore their ability to gain attention and advertise information about GP's guiding principles and socio-political engagement is vital.

Although the story of GZM developed along a completely different path, some quite unpredictable affinities with GP can be found in corporate communication. As advertised on its official website, the former Gazprom Gas Concern was radically reorganised into the Russian Joint Stock Company Gazprom in 1993. It has since developed into a global energy company for the production, processing, sale and transportation of gas and oil, both as vehicle fuel and for heat and electric power. Declaredly, Gazprom's mission is guaranteeing a reliable, efficient and balanced supply of natural gas to consumers, thus becoming a leader among global energy companies, and it is increasingly expanding its markets thanks to its efficiency and scientific-technical potential.<sup>4</sup>

Such high expectations are based on the fact that Gazprom holds the world's largest natural gas reserves. Furthermore, GZM highlights its potential to become an energy bridge between the European and Asian markets, in part thanks to its geographical location. The company also supports a variety of social projects concerning culture, science, arts and sports aimed at promoting a better and healthier lifestyle, including aid for children with special needs.

Furthermore, in 2015, the expanding company amended its environmental policy in agreement with the changes in national legislation, with the effect of ensuring environmental safety during hydrocarbon development operations and minimising their environmental impact. Hence, not even a gas drilling, hydrocarbon exploiting and distributing company can avoid displaying

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<sup>3</sup> In September 2013, 30 Greenpeace activists, dubbed the 'Arctic 30,' took action against the 'Prirazlomnaya,' an oil platform operated by Russian state-owned energy company Gazprom in Russia's Pechora Sea. The peaceful group tried to climb the platform to protest against the drilling. They were arrested by Russian soldiers and then released after two months (Novis 2013).

<sup>4</sup> According to its website, Gazprom accounts for 12% of the global gas output and 69% of domestic gas production, and owns the world's largest gas transmission system, which runs for a total length of 172,600 km. For more information, see <https://www.gazprom-international.com/>.

environmental concerns. Accordingly, the attention to environmental issues and related phrases like ‘environmentally-friendly’ are recurrent in narratives reported on GZM’s website, such as in the Environment section:

By early spring thousands of migrating birds head from their wintering areas to northern Russia to breed. Many of them settle close to Gazprom’s production facilities. To find out why, we went to the Tyumen Region to the vicinity of compressor station No.11 (CS-11), Gazprom Transgaz Surgut. According to the ecologists, this year a number of nestings there hit record high. CS-11 is well known to the locals of nearby settlements not only because it was constructed in 1978 on impassable swamps but also because for another year around the station has been a sophisticated environmentally-friendly facility of Gazprom Transgaz Surgut. One of the best gas testing labs of Gazprom operates here (Ermolayev et al. 2013).<sup>5</sup>

Apparently, human technological expertise and wildlife can go hand in hand from GZM’s perspective.

In this vein, striking similarities emerge between the two opposing corporations, whose aims could not be more different, so far as environment is depicted, represented and narrated.

### **3. YouTube – the leading video-sharing platform**

This study focuses on a comparison between the above-mentioned GZM’s and GP’s videos, which are displayed both on their official websites and through YouTube, and on their potential for engaging audiences. The choice of YouTube as a channel is strategic in order to optimise the circulation of multitudes of videos uploaded in many different countries. According to Lange (2014), YouTube can be considered as both one of the most popular collaborative social networks and a personally expressive medium.

In the words of its chief executive officers:

YouTube pitches itself to advertisers as the medium of the future [...and predictably], in five years, the majority of advertiser-supported videos will take place on a mobile device. (Lieberman 2015)

With more than 1.8 billion monthly logged-in users (and those are only the logged-in ones) and localized versions of YouTube stretching across 90 countries and 80 languages, we’re opening up the world to anyone with a cell phone and an internet connection. (Wojcicki, quoted in Jarboe 2018)

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<sup>5</sup> See [www.gazprom.com/press/news/reports/2013/nestling-boxes/](http://www.gazprom.com/press/news/reports/2013/nestling-boxes/).

Yet, the virtually unconstrained dimension of YouTube also gives scope to possible criticism<sup>6</sup> in the comments underneath the videos, which would not be able to find any space on official websites.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 *The multimodal critical discourse analysis approach*

Given the multilayered issues at stake, the intrinsically interdisciplinary multimodal critical discourse analysis (MCDA) approach can provide an adequate perspective, with its focus on pragmatic uses of language. MCDA takes its trajectory from CDA<sup>7</sup> with its efforts to unveil inequalities in the complex interaction of discourse, power and ideology, which was investigated in depth in Michael Foucault's (1980; 1969a; 1969b) and Roland Barthes's (1973; 1957) seminal works. Influenced by them (especially by Foucault), Norman Fairclough (2006; 2005; 2004; 2003; 2001; 1995; 1993; 1992), among many illustrious others,<sup>8</sup> has been a prolific critical author and a very influential voice in the wide domain of CDA. Concisely, Fairclough's main focuses are both on the transdisciplinary quality of CDA as a comprehensive semiotic approach to discourse and texts, which are considered as intrinsic constituents of social practices, and on the processes of change and social transformation, entailing the recontextualisation/rearticulation of discourses, genres and styles. Central concerns for CDA analysts are issues of unequal power relations/opportunities or access to information, gender/race/class discrimination, globalisation or political conflicts and, more recently, comprehensive ecological issues, in a variety of contexts and through different media.

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<sup>6</sup> See Patrick Moore, *Why I Left Greenpeace* (2015), <https://climatecite.com/why-i-left-greenpeace/>. Moore, who helped to create Greenpeace and then left it, declares that such policies can become too radical, to the point of disregarding scientific data and practical necessities. In Moore's words, "What began as a mission to improve the environment for the sake of humanity became a political movement in which humanity became the villain and hard science a non-issue."

<sup>7</sup> In the late 1970s, a team of linguists and literary theorists at the University of East Anglia, Fowler, Kress, Hodge, and Trew, taking their trajectory from Halliday's SFL, outlined critical linguistics (see Fowler and Kress 1979). Nowadays, CDA has expanded into many directions, ranging from the discourse historical approach (R. Wodak, M. Reisigl, K. Liebhart, K. Hofstätter, M. Karg, etc.) to the Sydney School (J. Martin, D. Rose, P. White, M. Bednareck, M. Zappavigna) as well as computational linguistics to some extent. Furthermore, in the field of knowledge-based professional communication and practices, we should mention such authors as V. Bhatia, M. Gotti, C. N. Candlin, S. Sarangi and W. Cheng, among many others, with their multi-layered attention to contexts.

<sup>8</sup> Adam Jaworski and Nikolas Coupland offer a comprehensive if not exhaustive view of the various branches of discourse analysis and analysts in their *Discourse Reader* (2014).

Since the mid-late 1980s, when W. J. T. Mitchell published *Iconology* (1986), and then *Picture Theory* (1994), more critical attention has been dedicated to the visual levels (images, pictures, signs, etc.). His works introduced such notions as the *pictorial turn* and the image/picture distinction in discourse studies and contributed to the development of the interdisciplinary study of visual media, now a crucial domain in discourse studies. Later on, with the publication of *Image Science: Iconology, Media Aesthetics, and Visual Culture* (2015), Mitchell supported the acknowledgement of the new ‘image science’ through the plurality of media. Thus, he foregrounded issues of media activism as well as reception, including synaesthesia, in the context of the contemporary mediascape. Gradually, owing to the visual turn and the rising dominance of multimodality, new analytical frames for multimodal CDA were developed. Among others, Kress (2010; 2000), van Leeuwen (2013; 2008) and Kress and van Leeuwen (2021; 2001) helped to shape multimodality studies; aspects of such progress from monomodality to multimodality is concisely illustrated below in their own words:

*For some time now, there has been, in Western culture, a distinct preference for monomodality. The most highly valued genres of writing (literary novels, academic treatises, official documents, and reports, etc.) came entirely without illustration, and had graphically uniform dense pages of print. Paintings nearly all used the same support (canvas) and the same medium (oils), whatever their style or subject. In concert performances, all musicians dressed identically and only conductor and soloists were allowed a modicum of bodily expression. The specialised theoretical and critical disciplines which developed to speak of these arts became equally monomodal: one language to speak about language (linguistics), another to speak about art (art history), yet another to speak about music (musicology), and so on, each with its own methods, its own assumptions, its own technical vocabulary, its own strengths, and its own blind spots. More recently, this dominance of monomodality has begun to reverse. Not only the mass media, the pages of magazines, and comic strips for example, but also the documents produced by corporations, universities, government departments, etc., have acquired colour illustrations and sophisticated layouts and typography. And not only the cinema and the semiotically exuberant performances and videos of popular music, but also the avant-gardes of the ‘high culture’ arts have begun to use an increasing variety of materials and to cross the boundaries between the various art, design, and performance disciplines, towards *multimodal Gesamtkunstwerke*, multimedia events, and so on. (Kress and van Leeuwen 2001, 1, italics added)*

In the same vein, Liu and O’Halloran (2009) foregrounded the notion of intersemiotic texture (ITX) as the key property of coherent multimodal texts, i.e. the cohesion between verbal language and images. Furthermore, Bateman et al. (2017, 12-14) observed how this multimodal turn is not limited to academic debates, but shapes everyday communication practices and ways of thinking and acting as well as the new media and ‘supermedia’ (e.g. an iPad showing a film

or a newspaper, or a website playing music).

More specifically, a set of analytical resources can be useful to show how images create and deliver meaning (in photos, movies, advertising, etc.),<sup>9</sup> which include:

- **Composition:** To frame an image, close-up, medium or long-distance shots are the most frequent options. The latter better establish the actors' relationship with the scene/landscape. *Canting* (the image is tilted left or right on the axis) and *two-point shots* (a shot of two people together) are also utilized.
- **Perspectives:**
  - High angle (or bird's-eye) shots – when the camera is higher and above the subject. These perspectives function as maps of the shooting environment.
  - Low angle shots – the subject is taken from below, so that it appears more powerful/threatening.
  - Eye level shots – these are the more 'realistic' choice, where the camera is placed as if a human being were really observing the scenery.
- **Saliency:** the dominant image that draws our attention.
  - Gaze vectors: the lines that draw us towards a particular image.
  - Gaze demand – the eyes of the image demand our attention.
  - Gaze offer – the person in the frame could be looking beyond the frame.
- **Colour and lighting:** e.g. red standing for passion; blue for peace and tranquility; black for death or fear. *Monochromatic* for black and white. *Saturation*, i.e. the colour could be bleached out, due to opening the aperture of the camera lens so that much light floods in. *Chiaroscuro*, i.e. the dramatic use of light and dark shadows.
- **Symbolism, icons, and intertextual allusions:** references to other texts and well-known symbols/images.<sup>10</sup>

Within the lively arena of discourse studies, a relatively recent branch of discourse analysis sprouted in the 1990s, within the wide framework of ecological approaches to languages, namely ecolinguistics (EL). In the words of Arran Stubbe, one of its foremost researchers, who delineated the consilience between language and the environment, thus situating EL within the field of linguistics, "Ecolinguistics tends to use the same forms of linguistic analysis as traditional

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<sup>9</sup> See, among others, Yao and Zhuo (2018), Ascher and Pincus (2013), Lagerwerf et al. (2012), Gillian (1988).

<sup>10</sup> Distilled and abridged, utilising their specific terminology verbatim, from Stinson (2012) and Chandler (2016).



critical discourse studies [... in the context of] the larger ecological systems that all life depends on” (2014, 117).

#### **4.2 The ecolinguistic approach**

The comprehensive and timely ecolinguistic perspective seemed suitable to investigate aspects of the multimodal representations of both GP’s campaigns and GZM’s self-advertising with their entailed geopolitical implications. Informed by the proactive attitude and civic engagement of CDA, EL, which emerged in the 1990s,<sup>11</sup> is committed to investigating

the role of language in the life-sustaining interactions of humans, other species and the physical environment. The first aim is to develop linguistic theories which see humans not only as part of society, but also as part of the larger ecosystems that life depends on. The second aim is to show how linguistics can be used to address key ecological issues, from climate change and biodiversity loss to environmental justice. (International Ecolinguistics Association n.d.)

EL has often investigated linguistic features (e.g. lexico-grammar, discursive strategies, etc.) in the media’s representations of environmental matters for a variety of purposes,<sup>12</sup> and the present comparative investigation on GZM’s and GP’s audio-visual and linguistic forms of communication falls within this domain of analysis.

In Stibbe’s view, ecolinguistics should be used to challenge the modern anthropocentric myths of unlimited progress, success, omnipotent science, the human domination of nature, and endless growth:

Ecolinguistics can explore the more general patterns of language that influence how people both think about, and treat, the world. It can investigate the stories we live by—mental models that influence behaviour and lie at the heart of the ecological challenges we are facing. There are certain key stories about economic growth, about technological progress, about nature as an object to be used or conquered, about profit and success, that have profound implications for how we treat the systems that life depends on. (2015, 1-2)

Furthermore, in terms of social cognition, in his words:

The language of *advertising can encourage us to desire unnecessary and environmentally*

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<sup>11</sup> The birth of ecolinguistics can be attributed Haugen’s (1972) work *The ecology of language*, which defined the notion of “language ecology.” Haugen was later followed by other linguists such as Fill, Halliday, Mühlhäusler and Peace, who investigated the interrelation of language, society and ecology.

<sup>12</sup> For a review, see Dastenaee and Poshtvan (2018).

*damaging products*, while nature writing can inspire respect for the natural world. How we think has an influence on how we act, so language can inspire us to destroy or protect the ecosystems that life depends on. *Ecolinguistics*, then, is about critiquing forms of language that contribute to ecological destruction and aiding in *the search for new forms of language that inspire people to protect the natural world*. (Stibbe 2015, 1, italics added)

EL should contribute to replacing the consumeristic stories and metaphors we live by<sup>13</sup> with environmentally friendly stories. In some detail, according to Stibbe, areas which are usually backgrounded (for example, wild nature, which is typically represented either as urban green space or an agricultural surface) should be foregrounded, and tendentious descriptions of climate change should be avoided. More relevantly for the purposes of the present study, Stibbe has clarified how

The discourses are analysed by showing how clusters of linguistic features come together to form particular worldviews or ‘cultural codes.’ A cultural code is ‘a compact package of shared values, norms, ethos and social beliefs [... which] constructs and reflect the community’s ‘common sense’ (Gavriely-Nuri 2012, 80). An example is the pervasive code that sees unlimited economic growth as both a possible and a desirable goal for human societies. (2014, 121)

Accordingly, Stibbe has proposed an analytical framework based on the conviction that stories are the key to (re)shaping the course of humanity. Among the deceptive stories we live by, he includes the ‘prosperity story’ (presenting material acquisitions and money as fundamental), the ‘biblical story’ (focusing on the afterlife) and the treacherous story of ‘human centrality,’ which erodes the necessary attention due to other forms of life. Stibbe delineates eight types of stories (i.e. shared beliefs, attitudes, and/or perspectives) which influence how people in a given culture think, talk and act, indicating what to look for in discourse analysis:

1. *Ideology*, i.e. a story about how the world was, is and should be in the minds of members of a group (e.g. *goods are assumed to be desirable*; consequently, consumers always prefer more). Analysts should therefore investigate the related discourses, i.e. the characteristic language features used by members of a group;
2. *Framing*, i.e. the use of a source frame (a packet of knowledge, e.g. *climate change*) to structure a target domain. Here the emphasis is on trigger words which bring a particular source frame to mind and need to be unravelled;
3. *Metaphors*, i.e. a type of framing where the source frame is from a concretely imaginable

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<sup>13</sup> Stibbe was clearly influenced by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980). See Stibbe (2016).

- area of life that is distinctly different from the target domain (e.g. *Earth [target] is a single spaceship [source]*, without unlimited reservoirs of anything). Accordingly, the focus is on trigger words that bring the source frame to mind and are to be unveiled;
4. *Evaluation*, i.e. an established story in people's minds about whether an area of life is good or bad (e.g. *low sales are bad*). Here, common *appraisal patterns* of language, which represent things positively or negatively need to be investigated/denaturalised;
  5. *Identity*, i.e. a story in people's minds about what it means to be a particular kind of person (e.g. *the ideal man is muscular*). Such aspects require an investigation of forms of language which characterise people and need to be investigated/denaturalised;
  6. *Conviction*, i.e. a story in a person's mind about whether a description is true/false, un/certain (e.g. *it is extremely likely that human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed planetary warming*). From this perspective, facticity patterns that represent such descriptions (e.g. through the use of high modality) need to be investigated/unveiled;
  7. *Erasure*, i.e. a story in people's minds that something is unimportant or unworthy of consideration (e.g. *natural resources are unimportant*). Hence, the analysis should aim to unveil such obliteration, by investigating patterns of language that erase or background something in the texts under analysis;
  8. *Saliency*, i.e. a story in a person's mind that an area of life is important or worthy of attention (e.g. *animals are important*). Accordingly, the analyst should highlight patterns of language which foreground an area of life that need to be investigated.<sup>14</sup>

Concisely, while CDA is mainly concerned with revealing the frequently hidden ideologies in everyday and/or institutional discourse, the specific contribution of EL is focused on the ecological context, with the entailed theoretical implications. EL criticises both superficial forms of 'greenspeak' and discourses depicting nature and other species as objects or resources for humans. Interestingly, the 'About Gazprom' video presents persuasive similarities with ecolinguistic modes of communication. However, as our comparative analysis will show, such aspects, when compared with GP's ethically-grounded videos, appear as forms of superficial 'greenspeak' for promotional purposes.

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<sup>14</sup> Distilled and abridged from Stibbe (2015, n.p.).

### 4.3 Procedure

It is by now a shared notion that methods for discourse analysis are more productive when they are flexible: while ‘grand theories’ often serve as a foundation, in specific analyses, ‘middle range theories’ frequently supply a better theoretical basis (Wodak 2011; 2015). In this study, while some of Stibbe’s categories proved useful, others were redundant and, besides, some multimodal features of the videos needed to be more specifically accounted for. Indeed, as verbal resources are only one of the many semiotic elements at stake here, the tables below are an attempt to account for both linguistic and non-linguistic factors in the same textual space.<sup>15</sup>

## 5. Data and results

### 5.1 GP’s video This is how people power saved the Arctic from Shell

In the script of this video, GP promotes its campaign against Shell and other companies, like Lego, with which it had an agreement. The video initially foregrounds the Arctic’s natural, uncontaminated beauty, in a bluish halo—interestingly enough, the ‘About Gazprom’ video also opens with a series of white and blue images.

Yet, GP’s video unfolds by showing the potential damage Shell could have done by continuing to explore and drill in the Arctic. Peter Capaldi’s voice narrates the story of how “YOU won a monumental victory for the Arctic.” Indeed, after three and a half years, thanks to a variety of campaigning efforts, i.e. by staging marches and promoting frequent public debates in the media, climbing rigs, bridges and skyscrapers where gigantic banners were unrolled, kayak activism, etc., ‘Greenpeacers’ finally ensured that the oil giant Shell stopped drilling in Arctic waters.

The video displays GP’s value as a powerful awareness-raising organisation. To varying extents, GP’s supporters were and are able to awaken people’s environmental conscience globally and in a range of different ways. As the excerpted images and texts in the Table 1 below show/narrate, GP’s **IDENTITY** is that of a strong-willed, synergic and successful association of people animated by the same ideals.<sup>16</sup>



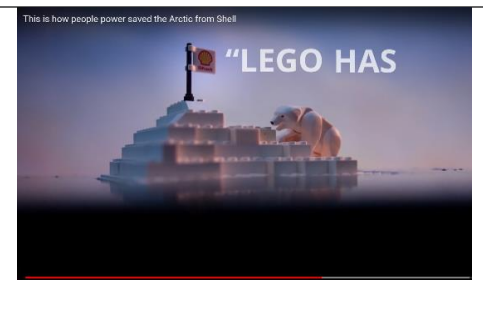
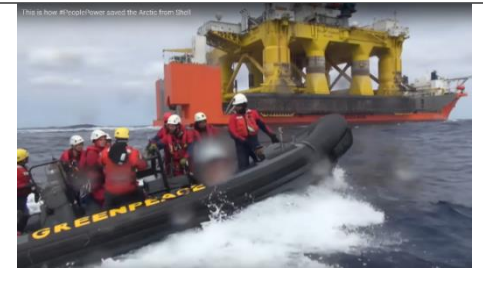
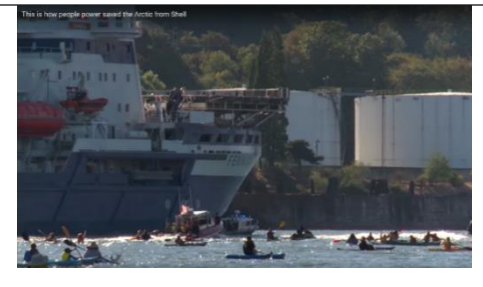
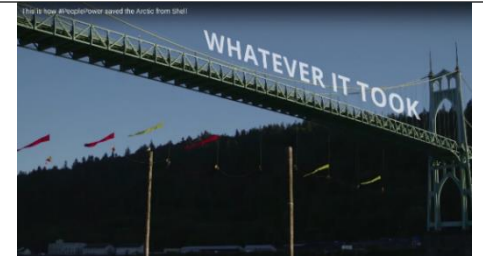
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<sup>15</sup> Yet there are still inevitable losses due to the requirement to ‘narrate’ non-verbal resources (e.g. music, the moving of the frames, etc.) with words rather than ‘show’ them directly, as Page has extensively explained (2010, 9).

<sup>16</sup> As explained in GP’s official website: “Greenpeace is a global, independent campaigning organization that uses peaceful protest and creative communication to expose global environmental problems and promote solutions that are essential to a green and peaceful future.” ‘Greenpeacers’ are frequently defined as ‘visionaries,’ ‘inspired trouble-makers’ and ‘trail-blazers’ in GP’s very numerous videos.

The Table displays features from the video. In the first column, **IDEOLOGY**, significant phrases/sentences from the verbal text of the video are shown, as these can better convey GP’s campaign inspiration and ethos. The second, **FRAMING**, is intended to be a synergic interpretation of the words in relation to the selected **IMAGES** (shown in the third column), both through the lens of EL and of MCDA (see Section 4).

Ideology	Framing	Images
(1) This is the Arctic. Beautiful isn't it?	In these two high angle shots that outline the environment, the blue and white colouring highlights wild nature and purity.	
(2) Shell tried to drill for oil here. But you said no. You said the risks were too high, and the rewards too dirty.	Here, words appear and are foregrounded as a banner.	
(3) So you scaled one of Shell's platforms and blocked it from moving for 77 hours. "Seven of	This long distance shot frames the arena of the GP vs Shell confrontation, and the greenish/greyish dominating hue indicates pollution.	
(4) us went up the rig	The brighter colours of this high angle shot represent swift action.	
(5) but 133,000 people came down it with us."	This medium distance shot composes an image of solidarity that includes humans and endangered species, and urges cooperation to 'Save the Arctic.' Bright colours and iconic blue.	

<p>(6) And you did all you could to stop them. You shut down Shell gas stations across the planet as the resistance turned global.</p>	<p>Foregrounded symbols and logo.</p>	
<p>(7) Six of you climbed western Europe's tallest skyscraper and when you reached the top, you spoke for every one of us.</p>	<p>A high-low dynamic is created in the quick sequence of shots from varying angles to convey the daring deeds of 'Greenpeacers.'</p>	
<p>(8) In 2014 you went after Shell's friends and ended a 50-year-old multimillion dollar partnership. "Lego has said it won't be renewing its branding contract with the oil giant Shell."</p>	<p>This medium distance shot of a sinking Lego iceberg with a polar bear tentatively climbing it represents the negative relationship between the two companies.</p>	
<p>(9) You boarded their rig as it sailed across the Pacific and occupied it for six days in the open ocean.</p>	<p>This close distance shot represents the challenging confrontation.</p>	
<p>(10) Their ships may have dwarfed yours, but your fleet outnumbered theirs.</p>	<p>This medium distance shot visualises the small vs great dimensions involved in this confrontation.</p>	
<p>(11) And you did whatever it took to get in their way.</p>	<p>This bird's eye view shot witnesses another daring protest. White iconic words against a blue sky.</p>	

(12) You drew a line in the ice.	Aerial shot of iconic words.	
(13) The oil giants have colonised every corner of our planet, but you made a stand in the Arctic.	Bird's eye view shot, dominating white, salience of the saved animals.	
(14) Now we can celebrate the power of people.	Iconic words, dominating white, green logo.	

**Tab. 1:** Excerpts from the video *This is how people power saved the Arctic from Shell* – uploaded October 16, 2015 – min. 2.53<sup>17</sup>

At the verbal level, in terms of Stibbe's **EVALUATION**, the appraisal patterns of language constantly represent nature positively, e.g. "This is the Arctic / Beautiful isn't it." Contrarily, and predictably, the representation of the 'oil giant' Shell is negative and unappealing: "Shell tried to drill for oil here. But you said no. You said the risks were too high, and the rewards too dirty." Overall, the patterns of language are deictic and cohesive with the visual images (ITX). At the metaphorical level, a contrast is outlined between the gigantic dimension of Shell and the much smaller, human-size dimension of Greenpeace's boats: "Their ships may have dwarfed yours, but your fleet outnumbered theirs." That notwithstanding, GP campaigners were successful: "You drew a line in the ice. The oil giants have colonised every corner of our planet, but you made a stand in the Arctic."

Furthermore, the repeated use of the pronoun 'you' is functional to engage the viewers and give them the role of positive doers/activists:

But you said no / You said the risks were too high / you scaled one of Shell's platforms ... for

<sup>17</sup> See [www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOZnQpJwIg4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOZnQpJwIg4).

77 hours / you did all you could to stop them / You shut down Shell gas stations / You told Obama to cancel Shell's licence to drill / But Obama ignored you / Six of you climbed western Europe's tallest skyscraper and when you reached the top, you spoke for every one of us / you decided to crash the party / you went after Shell's friends / You boarded their rig / And you did whatever it took to get in their way / You found inspired ways to bring the Arctic to Shell's doorstep and you refused to leave / You drew a line in the ice / you made a stand in the Arctic.

When celebrating the success of single actions, or the final success, the choice is the inclusive pronoun 'we/us': "Seven of us went up the rig but 133,000 people came down it with us / Now we can celebrate the power of people."







Significantly, the English musical group Massive Attack, who were involved in some of GP's activities, provided the soundtrack for this video. The group's typical guitar crescendos and lavish orchestral arrangements include some digital editing and mixing, with psychedelic effects, which make this music quite unique. Such crescendos may symbolise the protesters' ever-rising voices.








The multimodal co-occurrence in the same representational arena of words, images, music, the rhythm of the succession of frames (see note 13), and the coherence of the message—also achieved through repetition and the use of simple syntactic structures—succeeded in creating strong intersemiotic cohesion.



## **5.2 About Gazprom**

In the script of the GZM official video, the company introduces itself as the most environmentally friendly and economically viable answer to humanity's inescapable, constant need for energy. Although GZM owns and exploits the world's largest explored gas reserves, its expansion is still ongoing—vast areas of Europe are covered, including through submarine routes, and the Chinese border has been reached. In their view, GZM's pipeline is the 21st century Silk Road, which will connect them to a most promising market of new customers. GZM's technological tools (drills and pipes) are magnified as well as their ability to connect anything, from power plants and industries to the smallest cottages of citizens across Russia and Europe through their powerful grid, which is repeatedly visualised. Overall, the video aims at emphasising the significance and value of the company's **IDENTITY**, that is, what it means to be a cutting-edge fast-expanding Russian enterprise and a reliable supplier for the domestic market, Europe and beyond. The following table shows linguistic and visual features in more detail (see Section 5.1).



<b>Ideology</b>	<b>Framing</b>	<b>Images</b>
<p>(1) Earth. Every day, humans require millions of kilowatts of electricity and heat energy.</p>	<p>Only white and blue colour this image, where Russia is foregrounded.</p>	
<p>(2) Today natural gas is the most economically viable and environmentally friendly energy source available.</p>	<p>This aerial shot of an uncontaminated, white natural setting reinforces the notion of environmentally friendly energy.</p>	
<p>(3) Every year, Gazprom is capable of recovering over half a trillion cubic metres of gas.</p>	<p>This aerial shot of wildlife at dawn has the same effect.</p>	
<p>(4) Very soon, almost a third of all recovered gas will come from the newly developed field on the Yamal peninsula.</p>	<p>This aerial shot further reinforces the cohesion between nature and the aforementioned human industry.</p>	
<p>(5) It's named Yekaterina and is a super-modern domestic drilling rig.</p>	<p>In this aerial shot, technological achievements are foregrounded in a white and snowy setting.</p>	
<p>(6) A powerful spinning wrench connects the drill pipes one after another, metre after metre.</p>	<p>This high-angle shot displays the power of Yekaterina at work.</p>	

<p>(7) The gas [...] travels many thousands of kilometres to reach a power plant or to become the blue flame in your kitchen stove.</p>	<p>This extreme close-up shot of the blue flame—blue being the colour of GZM’s logo—represents GZM reaching the heart of citizens’ homes.</p>	
<p>(8) The Russian unified pipeline system stretches over 170,000 km, and everyday Gazprom is extending its grid.</p>	<p>The white and blue map graphically displays the notion of connection.</p>	
<p>(9) For over 30 years, Gazprom has been a reliable gas supplier to the countries of Europe.</p>	<p>This medium distance shot of men at work is in a natural setting, with bright colours, again emphasising the positive tie between nature and GZM.</p>	
<p>(10) Our entrance into more large scale markets is ahead.</p>	<p>In this long shot, this large modern building fits easily within the frame, thus foregrounding the expansive commercial power of GZM.</p>	
<p>(11) The power of the Siberian gas pipeline will connect the Kovyktinskoye field in the Irkutsk region with the Chayandinskoye field in Yakutia.</p>	<p>In this aerial shot, green nature and blue sky coexist with pipelines, without apparent disruption.</p>	
<p>(12) The pipe will stretch for more than 2,000 km across the wild taiga to ... the Chinese border. [...] It is truly the Silk Road of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.</p>	<p>One more white and blue map graphically reinforces the notion of connection, up to as yet unexplored borders.</p>	
<p>(13) Liquid gas does not need pipes. Gazprom’s LNG tankers can deliver the product to any destination.</p>	<p>This shot of a blue marine setting puts the natural flora to the fore, and on a different plane, at some distance, a GZM tanker.</p>	

(14) [GZM] brings light and heat to the citizens of Russia.	This aerial shot celebrates light as the medium of human activity.	
Triumphally, GZM's logo is foregrounded.		

**Tab. 2:** Excerpts from the video *About Gazprom* – uploaded October 22, 2016 – min. 3.55.<sup>18</sup>

The verbal information is supplied by a male voice. In terms of Stibbe's **EVALUATION**, the appraisal patterns of the language indicate a preference for superlative forms, such as: “the largest natural gas recovery and delivery company / the world's largest explored gas reserves / super-modern / the peninsula's largest gas deposit / the shortest route / one of the most promising markets / largest gas volumes.”

The metaphorical quality of the video mainly relies on its blue colour, which typically evokes peace and tranquillity. Here, blue is the colour of the flame in citizens' kitchen stoves, of the sky and sea in the natural scenes, and of the maps, where GZM's blue logo is often displayed. At the verbal level, the highest metaphorical peak is reached with the phrase “truly the Silk Road of the 21st century” that is represented by GZM's pipelines.

The quick sequence of shots creates a visual/conceptual continuity based on the cumulative effects of information on GZM's capacities, potentialities and ever-successful progress.

The soundtrack echoes the music of adventure/action films, with cyclic crescendos when accompanying the representations of GZM's ongoing activities, and triumphal sounds when assessing GZM's achievements.

## 6. Discussion

The purpose of promotionalisation is foregrounded in both videos; this aspect falls into the domain of the marketisation of discourse—a phenomenon that has been increasingly investigated in discourse studies since the publication of Fairclough's (1993) enlightening

<sup>18</sup> See [www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FA6X\\_ZeXQc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FA6X_ZeXQc).

“Critical Discourse Analysis and the marketization of public discourse.”<sup>19</sup> Such promotionalisation can be realised more effectively at multimodal level, as it was observed in the two widely circulated videos under investigation.

In particular, GP’s video (‘This is how people power saved the Arctic from Shell’), grounded on the ethical principles of environmental sustainability, efficiently celebrates its successful Arctic campaign, and asks for global solidarity. Such attitudinal positioning is coherent with the identity of GP as an international nongovernmental organization and inspired civil actor in the global context. On the other hand, GZM’s video is promoting its image as a big, powerful Russian company, increasingly conquering new markets: ‘About Gazprom’ is an example of efficient corporate communication which shows that the company is aware of the evolving global contexts and new attitudes towards environmental issues.

Yet, though intrinsically different in their aims, there are some striking similarities in the two videos, as shown in 5.1 and 5.2. Indeed, both videos open with images where a blue and white tinge pervades the initial sequence of frames (screenshots 1, 2 and 13 for GP’s video, and 1-3 for GZM’s), which symbolises the unpolluted nature and wildlife, notably bears for GP and elks for GZM. Apart from being, typically, the colour of tranquillity and serenity, blue is often found in nature as the pale blue of the daytime sky or as the deep blue of a pool of water. At the verbal level, nature is mentioned in both videos.

Then, in both videos, the scene moves to technology; a drill is represented as the place of protest in GP’s video (screenshot 4) and as the realisation of a super-modern tool in GZM’s video (screenshot 6). Another virtual graphic match between the two videos is found in the quite similar facades of skyscrapers, which are represented as the place of a daring protest (GP screenshot 7) and as a demonstration of economic growth (GZM screenshot 10). Furthermore, a strong line is visualised in both GP screenshot 12, as the sign of the power of the Greenpeace’s protest, and GZM screenshot 11, as the sign of a monumental technological connection. Predictably enough, both videos end with close-ups of their logos.

Remarkably, while in GP’s video bears are present both as living animals and as puppets or toys, no bear is to be seen in GZM’s video. This erasure is significant insofar as the bear has been a widespread national symbol, both in classical literature and fables and in contemporary cartoons, from the Russian Empire up to the present-day Russian Federation. Actually, in UK and US caricatures, the bear has been typically used to designate a big, brutal and awkward Russian character. Hence, possibly, bears were not represented in GZM’s video to avoid

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<sup>19</sup> See also Wang and Dezheng (2021), Cavaliere (2021), Hoang and Rojas-Lizana (2015), Catenaccio (2008), Bahtia (1992).

undesirable associations with both caricatures and the victims of environmental exploitation in GP's campaigns.

## 7. Concluding remarks

The present investigation has shown how recognisable and frequent the similarities between GP's and GZM's videos can be. Recognisable graphic matches have been found between the 2015 GP video, which foregrounded a dire environmental crisis caused by an unethical human intervention and celebrated Greenpeace's victorious campaign against Shell, and the 2016 GZM video, which celebrated the triumph of an array of monumental human technological interventions/realisations. Affinities are apparent also at their lexico-grammatical levels, e.g. in their preference for short, simple sentences, emphasised by the musical rhythm, and in the use of 'environmentally-friendly' notions.

Actually, GP's videos' main communicative purpose is to engage new activists and donors by authenticating Greenpeace's feats as goals to be shared globally—'whatever it takes.' To this end, celebrities such as Emma Thompson or Peter Capaldi (see 5.1), among others, have participated in many videos, endorsing Greenpeace's efforts to make the world a better place and to dispel the 'fairy tales' of ever-growing human progress and gains. Though on a different plane, GP's verbal language closely echoes ecolinguistics' formulations in suggesting new 'stories that we should live by,' where nature is considered from the perspective of environmental sustainability. On a different level, EL shares GP's proactive attitude in encouraging the search for new forms of inspirational language and fostering green-sensitive attitudes by making ecological values salient for the mainstream public.

Declaredly, similar perspectives are shared by GZM when promoting its corporate image. How can this commonality be explained?

In recent times, and now increasingly frequently, environmental issues are polarising societal attention and terms like 'sustainable development,' 'environmentally-friendly' and '-free' are recurrent in mainstream communication. The notion of 'stories' was also prioritised in climate activist Greta Thunberg's fiery discourse at the UN's 2019 Climate Action Summit: "People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction, and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth!"

Apparently, in the contemporary mediascape, not even a gas exploiting company such as Gazprom can help representing its sustainability and environmental concerns. Interestingly, this investigation foregrounded both the pervasiveness of the new stories of sustainability, equity and justice we should live by and how multifaceted their realisation may be, ranging

from GP's energetic campaigns to the promotion of GZM's corporate image, in the ineludible neutrality of rhetoric.

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