The Representation of the European Union in the Canadian Media during the Climate Change Debate 2007

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Abstract

This article examines the portrayal of the EU during the height of the climate change debate in 2007 as represented by the Canadian media. One result of the linguistic analysis is the emergence of two competing discourses about the EU, a Euro-sceptical or anti-EU discourse and a Euro-friendly or pro-EU discourse. This study provides some preliminary results, which illuminate how the media in a non-EU country perceive the power, importance and leadership role of the EU or lack thereof.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, process types, newspaper, European Union, Canada.

1. Introduction

The presence and effectiveness of the European Union (EU) on the world stage are dependent on the ways by which it is being recognized and construed as a political entity capable of making decisions and acting successfully. In this respect the media are vital. They are not a passive mirror, but play a profoundly active role in framing and constructing actors and issues and thus contribute to various versions of 'reality' and 'actorness'. Consequently, the media influence the ways public expectations are being generated *vis-à-vis* the EU and its capabilities to deliver concrete results as an actor not only on the European level but also on the international/global level. However, academic research has rather ignored the roles assumed by the media in creating the EU's image abroad. Research projects to examine the EU's perception in third countries have been launched only very recently (e.g. Chaban et al. 2007; Croci and Tossutti 2007).

The systematic study of linguistic practices related to discourses about the EU in general and the climate change debate in particular is motivated by the question of how European Union actors and institutions are portrayed and particularly what role(s) and processes are attributed to them and how these attributions are justified. An interesting result of this analysis is the emergence of a discursive 'struggle' played out between competing and sometimes mutually exclusive discourses. The two broader discourses, which are promoted in Canadian media coverage, are, on the one hand, a Euro-sceptical discourse, which at times even includes elements of 'Euro-hostility',

and a Euro-friendly discourse. There are, of course, various degrees of Euro-scepticism and Euro-friendliness respectively between, and even within these two poles.

A central aim of this study is to examine and compare the discursive practices, which are employed by various Canadian newspapers to promote and produce Euro-scepticism or Euro-friendliness on the basis of the various roles, and identities they ascribe to the EU. In order to do so, I use the multidisciplinary resources of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and the concept of process types from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Young and Harris (2004), for example, argue that SFL is the linguistic theory that is closest to the aims and perspectives of critical social research, and that CDA and SFL can be seen as complementary to each other (see also Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999).

The EU and Canada share many values and interests, which call for a close dialogue and for continued cooperation. It is no accident that the preamble to the Agreement on Commercial and Economic Cooperation between the European Economic Community (EEC) and Canada (1976) emphasizes the role of the 'common heritage, special affinity and shared aspirations, which unite Canada and the countries of the European Communities.' Resnick (2005: 96) even goes so far as to describes Canada as 'Euro-American state, situated on the doorstep of the most unabashedly American of New World states, a state that would fit remarkably well into the European Union, were it located on the European continent, but which finds itself instead on the North American [continent].'

It remains to be seen which of the competing discourses on and about the EU in Canada has the potential to (or already does) operate in hegemonic manners and thus strongly influences public perceptions and policy making.[1]

2. Critical Discourse Analysis: Concepts of Discourse and Literature Review

CDA has demonstrated rather successfully the many ways in which language use is linked to wider social and cultural processes (e.g. Jäger 1996; van Dijk 1993, 1998; Wodak et al. 1999; Wodak and Chilton 2005). Scholars of CDA depart from the assumption that language and human society are inextricable, that a considerable part of the life and experience that people share broadly occur through language. They agree that discourse is a practical and social activity reflecting and reproducing culture; therefore, it can only be fully understood and analyzed in relation to the situations, institutions and sociopolitical/socio-cultural structures which frame a particular discursive event.

Discourse describes a complex system of texts and utterances of all kinds (written and spoken) through which knowledge, power and control is (re-) produced. This system is continuously constructed and reflected upon through speaking and writing, it is thus in constant progress. Consequently, discourse cannot be equated with the traditional notion of 'text', 'conversation', or 'speech', due to its interconnectedness with socio-political, cultural and historical variables. Discourse has roots in the past, an impact on the present, and influences the future. As Foucault (1989, 1991) argues, texts

should not be studied as documents, which are isolated entities discussing something, but rather as discourse, which is part of a network of relations of power and identity - as discourse that is part of ongoing societal struggles.

Fundamental to CDA is the assumption that people, as social subjects, interactively partake in discourses and resultantly contribute to the maintenance, transformation and/or replacement of such discourses. One can say, then, that language is indeed socially shaped; but it is also socially shaping, i.e. discourse is dialectical.

When texts are put into their socio-political and socio-cultural contexts, their ideology is uncovered and another, though interdependent, dimension of discourse is taken into consideration: the transmission of beliefs and ideas. This can be quite explicit. Often, however, ideologies are rather implicit or implied components of a text. According to van Dijk (1995, 1998), ideologies are 'interpretation frameworks'; as they provide the cognitive foundation for attitudes of various groups in society. Fowler (1996: 165) also notes that ideologies are not essentially 'false' or 'bad' forms of consciousness:

> I do not mean the derogatory sense of the word ("false consciousness" or "delusion"), but simply the system of beliefs, values, and categories by reference to which a person or a society comprehends the world. As we have seen, language performs a crucial role in stabilizing, reproducing, and changing ideology.

This approach to discourse implies that in modern societies power relations are often reproduced and legitimized at the ideological level. Hence, ideologies are replicated in discourse and may often become 'internalized'. Since the 1980s, CDA has produced the majority of the research into media discourse including newspaper, television and radio broadcasts. Since CDA is specifically interested in revealing the role of discourse in reproducing or challenging socio-political dominance, media are a particular subject of CDA analysis. News representations are crucial in representing cultures, people, politics and social life.

> [N]ews representations contribute to ways in which people see themselves, their own identity and that of others, and the relations between "us" and "them". For any group [...] news coverage is a means of gaining wider attention for their agenda, of making their voices heard, and of possibly making a difference on issues important to them. (Pietikäinen 2003: 583)

Various research projects using the broad approach of CDA have been launched over the past years, which examine EU related media coverage in its member states. Oberhuber et al. (2005), for example, looked at how the debate surrounding the European constitution at the Brussels Summit in December 2003 was represented in different European countries highlighting the similarities and differences. Bärenreuther (2005) examined the European identity constructions in the Swedish press focusing on the Haider debate (the political situation in Austria in 1999 when the right-wing populist Jörg Haider and his FPÖ were voted into the cabinet by 26.9% of the Austrian electorate). Furthermore, CDA has also been used to investigate virtual communication. Wodak and Wright (2006), for example, analyzed the EU's Futurum online discussion forum to determine if such debate forums could have a socio-

political impact, i.e. the potential to narrow the gap between the EU and the citizens it is supposed to serve. Other projects on 'internal' European media reporting assess the possible emergence of a European Public Sphere/Space through the analysis of national media coverage of transnational issues (e.g. EMEDIATE or Koopmans and Erbes' (2003) model of the Europeanisation of the public sphere[2]). In terms of 'outsider' perspectives towards the EU, however, there have not been many studies to date.[3] I hope this article can contribute towards filling that gap.

3. Corpus and Topics

This ongoing study examines various Canadian news outlets and their potential to construct an effective or less-than-effective EU discourse abroad. The database includes the two national Canadian newspapers the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post*. The latter is published by CanWest MediaWorks Publications Inc., which is Canada's largest newspaper publisher with 10 major metro dailies and 23 smaller daily, weekly, and community papers. Moreover, to account for a more regional distribution, the following newspapers were also selected for analysis: *The Vancouver Sun* and *Calgary Herald* for Western Canada and the *Ottawa Citizen, Montreal Gazette and Chronicle Herald* for Central and Eastern Canada. 'FPinfomart.ca', Canada's largest provider of media monitoring as well as the electronic version of the 'Canadian Periodical Index', CPI.Q, were used as search facilities. The search key words 'EU' and 'European Union' refined the area. Table 1 summarizes the results of the quantitative analysis for the year 2007. Articles were classified into very broad categories including domestic and international as well as political and economic issues. For example, one macro-category I identified was 'human rights'. Subsumed under this label are articles on the violation and promotion of human rights such as the EU lobby to ban the death penalty. Other macro-categories include a rather diverse and unrelated mix of macro-topics; under 'EU proposals and policies' I subsumed, for example, macro-topics such as climate change and global warming as well as articles on the EU constitution/treaty (see Table 2). I define (macro) topics as the most obvious properties of discourse, since they are, generally speaking, what is talked or written about. Where necessary, these macro-topics were then broken down into even smaller topic categories. Regarding the climate change debate, I defined the following sub-topics:

a) EU's proposed plan for emission cuts
b) proposals of individual countries, e.g. England, Finland, Canada
c) actions/measures taken or introduced to reduce emissions, e.g. speed limit on autobahn, light bulb conversion, shipping and aviation industry to be included in emission trading scheme.

This division mainly provides structure. Various categories, topics and sub-topics necessarily overlap due to intertextual communicative linkages or flows between and within EU institutions, EU-member states and non-EU members/world. For example, sub-topic c (action/measures) in the climate change debate often refers back to the original proposals (i.e. sub-topic a) as introduced by the EU in February and March 2007.

Table 1: Number of EU articles according to macro-category (2007)

Macro-category	No of articles
EU and EU member states (including topics on enlargement)	50
EU and non-EU countries which are currently aspiring to EU membership	14
EU's role in countries of (former) crisis	35
EU and human rights	17
EU – Canada relations	43
EU and non-EU countries which are not aspiring to EU membership	45
EU proposals and policies	103
Other issues	84

Table 2: Macro-categories and macro-topics

EU and EU member states (including topics on enlargement), e.g. the EU's 50th anniversary; *Poland:* blocks EU initiatives; *Germany*: wants EU-wide law against denying the Holocaust	**EU – Canada relations**, e.g. proposed Canada - EU free trade agreement; EU ban on Canadian seal products; EU threatens Canada over Canadian visa rules
EU and non-EU countries which are currently aspiring to EU membership, e.g. *Turkey*: discussions of Turkey's EU membership; *Montenegro*: introduction of EU free trade zone for Montenegro	**EU and non–EU countries which are not aspiring to membership**, e.g. *Russia*: energy resources/ dependence; *EU, Russia, USA*: missile shield debate; EU-Africa Summit
EU's role in countries of (former) crisis, e.g. *Iran*: nuclear program; *Kosovo*: autonomy/supervised statehood for Kosovo; *Libya*: Bulgarian medics freed by EU	**EU proposals and policies**, e.g. climate change and global warming; protection of endangered species; EU constitution/EU treaty
EU and human rights, e.g. violation of human rights (secret CIA flights n Europe); EU urged to take human rights lead; EU lobbies for ban on death penalty	**Other issues**, almost all article in this category report on the EU's anti-trust regulations (e.g. EU versus Microsoft and iTunes); currency: the Euro and other currencies

The quantitative results were complemented by qualitative analyses. So far, three topics have been chosen for detailed linguistic analyses representing (as is the case for the entire corpus) various newspaper genres such as 'hard' and 'soft' news as well as opinion, e.g. columns and editorials.[4] The three topics are: the climate change debate, the new proposed Canada-EU trade deal and the EU's 50th anniversary. The latter event has provided a unique opportunity for the media to report on the EU in broader terms, in ways somewhat detached from day-to-day business. Furthermore, it also presents a distinctive occasion to contemplate the pros and cons of the European project

(see Retzlaff and Gänzle 2008). The new proposed economic partnership agreement or trade deal between Canada and the EU, which would see a greater liberalization of transatlantic trade and investment, has stimulated great discussion not only in business and academic circles (e.g. Guerin 2008, Guerin and Napoli 2008; Leblond 2008) but also among the public.[5] Finally, the representation of the EU's role in the climate change debate can uncover underlying ideological stances as well as systematic misrepresentations. It has been pointed out for UK tabloids, for example, that the representation of climate change in these papers 'diverged from the scientific consensus that humans contribute to climate change' (Boykoff and Mansfield 2008: 1).

4. The EU's Role in the Climate Change Debate: From Green Champion to Loser?

The media can construct a certain discursive reality for its readers. As Chouliaraki (1999: 38) points out, the media is a 'public sphere, that is, social space where people as citizens are drawn into informed debates about contemporary issues of national and international interests [...].' The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to examine the portrayal of the European Union in the Canadian press during the climate change debate in the first 7 months of 2007 in order to determine the discursive reality presented to Canadians. In doing so, the following features will be examined in more detail: lexical choices, positive self-presentation and negative other presentation, speech acts, modality and process types.

4.1 The Euro-friendly Discourse

Media coverage on climate and the EU was very prominent between January 2007 and June 2007 due to the measures, which were introduced by the EU in the first quarter of 2007 to fight global warming (CO_2 emission cuts by 20% below 1990-levels by 2020). The EU-Canada summit in June 2007 in Heiligendamm, Germany with its priority focus on climate change was another event that received extensive media coverage in Canada.

The tone of the initial media response regarding the EU proposed emission cuts was partly positive in February and March 2007. The EU was seen as an active initiator and a driving force to reach its climate change objectives. The EU proposals were represented as 'ambitious', 'bold', 'groundbreaking' and 'inspiring' and the EU was projected as a leader. In the negotiation literature, there are various views on types of leadership (e.g. Malnes 1995; Underdal 1994; Young 1991). According to Young (1991), for example, the following quotations portray the EU as a 'structural' leader by acting as a role model, as an example to be followed:

(1)
"What Europeans have done is put the bar way up there for us," said John Bennett, executive director of the Climate Action Network. We want to see the Canadian government use the European Union as the model, rather than the Unites States. (De Souza 2007: A8)

(2)
Liberal Leader Stephane Dion has dramatically revamped his approach to climate change [...]. Mr. Dion said his new approach was inspired by ambitious new plans from the European Union [...]. (Curry 2007: A1)

The supporting discourse considers the EU as 'the leader in the developed world at tackling climate change' (Mayeda 2007: A11) and continues to do so until June 2007. The EU is perceived as playing a key international role in the next round of setting emissions targets after the Kyoto objectives run out in 2012. This kind of leadership role for the EU is often attributed to it by environmental groups such as the NGO Climate Action Network whose voice is represented in example (1) or by liberal politicians as in (2).[6] The same holds true for topics regarding human rights and animal protection.[7] Across various fields including human rights, animal protection rights and climate change the EU is conceived of as international actor and even world leader by, at least, NGOs.

The EU has had a prominent position in green politics (the *Montreal Gazette* 2007: A16, even called the EU 'a shining example of green consciousness, not to say conscience' in its editorial) as well as the capabilities to provide leadership. However, an important criterion in this context is the extent to which the EU's leadership efforts can be considered successful in terms of generating followers. Looking at the Canadian coverage of EU proposed ideas to tackle climate change it seems that apart from a small segment of the Canadian public who sees the EU as leader, the majority does not. They do not conceive of the EU as being capable of taking on the particular responsibility of guiding other parties and countries in directions that could lead to joint solutions. The various negative representations of the EU and its climate change proposals in the Canadian press attest to this.

4.2 The Euro-sceptical Discourse

Simultaneously, a rather sceptical discourse emerges which portrays European leaders as trying to 'polish' their public image by apparently taking a lead in tackling global warming. In reality, however, EU rhetoric on the topic is said to be empty and it is not a greater or morally superior concern for the environment that drives the EU emission-reduction plan but other motives such as, for example, a 'terrible fear' of Russia:

(3)
Fear of Russia marks Europe's green policy

On the surface, it was an act of ecological virtue: European leaders introduced a policy yesterday that would see its 500 million citizens cut their greenhouse-gas emissions [...]. But behind the ambitious proposed continent-wide policy is another motive: terrible fear of Russia's near total power to control Europe's energy future. (Saunders 2007: A1)

This *Globe and Mail* front page article, which is continued on page 16, displays the loaded word 'fear' four times in the form of nominalizations. It is used only once in connection with climate 'fear of global warming' but three times in reference to Russia: 'Fear of Russia', 'terrible fear of Russia's near total power to control Europe's energy future ' and 'renewed fear of Russian

dominance'. The process of 'to fear' has been turned into a nominal. Nominalizations omit agents and thus, do not specify who exactly fears Russia: the EU leaders? The citizens of Europe? All of Europe? Nominalizations seem to be a powerful and effective tool to express modal certainty (Simon-Vandenbergen 1996: 403). Subjective statements become a 'thing', i.e. the lexical item 'fears' becomes an entity that seems to be indisputable because it is represented as, more or less, a fact. Moreover, the modifier 'terrible' and the phrases 'near total power to control Europe' as well as 'Russian dominance' do not leave an impression of the EU as a powerful leader. It rather questions its role as a key international player in the climate change debate because a) the EU appears to be 'weak' and in an inferior position and b) its motives are not genuine, i.e. driven by real green concerns.

This becomes also evident in the later coverage in March through June 2007. Although the 'Russian threat' argumentation is not being continued, the EU is exposed as only paying lip service to the need to make reductions and is accused of 'high pitched rhetoric' and unrealistic short term strategies:

> (4)
> Last week, the European Union declared that it had practically saved the planet. [...] With its high-pitched rhetoric, you would be forgiven for believing that the EU has now single-handedly taken the major step toward solving the problem. (Lomborg 2007: A16)

The image that emerges from the analysis of EU-critical articles is that of the EU making 'lofty promises' at a very high cost, which will have 'virtually no environmental effect'. This is contrasted with the 'real', 'hard', and '[...] economically feasible and advantageous' emission cuts of long-term targets and investment in R&D (Lomborg 2007: A16) as proposed by countries such as Canada or Australia. The two semantic macro-strategies that underlie this argumentation are positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation (van Dijk e.g. 1998). The 'other' here is the EU or representatives of EU-member states whereas the 'self' includes Canada, other countries such as the U.S., Japan, Australia, China and India or even 'the rest of the world' (see below), which have proposed 'real' targets. These macro strategies are linguistically realized by, for example, mockery and sarcasm, metaphor, polarization and contrast.

4.2.1 Positive Self-presentation and Negative Other-presentation

Canada is among the few countries that have not stationed a permanent media correspondent in Brussels. Issues relating to the EU, or Europe in general, are most often covered from London or Paris. Ultimately, journalists are likely to draw from sources that are available to them at their site, so if reporting from London, foreign correspondents may be prone to duplicate Euro-sceptic views that characterize at least some segments of the British media. The continuous strategy of polarization - positive description and presentation of the in-group, in our case, Canada and 'the rest of the world', and negative other-presentation, here the EU, enforces stereotypes and prejudices and thus leads to a biased perception of reality (see van Dijk 1998 on the concept of the 'ideological square,' i.e. 'us'/in-group vs. 'them'/out-group). The following

examples illustrate the systematic use of certain linguistic strategies of positive self-presentation and negative other presentation.

Mockery, sarcasm/irony and metaphor

(5)
the European Union declared that it had practically saved the planet. (Lomborg 2007: A16)

(6)
With its high-pitched rhetoric, you would be forgiven for believing. (ibid.)

(7)
In an orgy of self-flagellation, Britain placed itself on a pedestal of carbon purity this week. (Mortished 2007: B10)

The employment and attribution of sarcastic or ironic utterances involves and conveys certain attitudes and judgments on part of both the producers and the interpreters of such text and talk (e.g. Hutcheon 1994). The sample linguistic acts of irony/sarcasm and mockery cited above display contempt or at least non-agreement with EU proposals and the proposals of individual EU member states such as Britain. They ironically echo the apparent actions of the EU and its member states although it is not clear if and how the EU itself has actually 'declared' that it 'saved the planet.' The same holds true for the metaphorical expressions in the last example. These utterances serve to downplay or reject the (positive) action proposals of the EU; they have an oppositional function. Simultaneously, positive self-presentation of 'our' actions construct a 'reality' with which the audience can readily agree since 'our' climate change proposals are represented as containing 'real, hard emission targets [...]' where each 'offers a marked contrast from European countries' official policies, which have shiny exteriors, but hollow cores' (Gunter 2007: A12).

Contrast, implication and emotionally loaded language, e.g. exaggeration

(8)
[T]he current cut-emissions-now-before-it-is-too-late mindset neglects the fact that the world has no sensible short term solutions. [...] We need to find a viable, long term strategy that is smart, equitable and doesn't require inordinate sacrifice for trivial benefits. (Lomborg 2007: A16)

(9)
Let us hope that the rest of the world will keep its cool and propose a better, cheaper and more effective solution for the future. (ibid.)

(10)
In addition to Canada, The U.S., Japan, Australia, China and India have all announced emission reduction schemes [...] They contain real, hard emission targets and they propose 2050 as their deadline [...]. Each offers a marked contrast from European countries' official policies, which have shiny exteriors, but hollow cores. (Gunter 2007: A12)

(11)
There is the climate show. Then there is the climate reality. (ibid.)

The 'us' vs. 'them' dichotomy can thus be illustrated through contrastive discourse structures that emphasize the negative or 'short term' thinking of the EU:

Table 3: 'Us' vs. 'Them'

'Us' (Canada and 'the rest of the world')	**'Them' (EU)**
a) viable, long term strategy that is smart and equitable	a) short term solutions, inordinate sacrifice for trivial benefits
b) better, cheaper and more effective solution for the future	b) good/bad, cheap/expensive and effective/ineffective solution for the future*
c) our emission reduction schemes contain real, hard emission targets	c) their official climate policies have shiny exteriors, but hollow cores
d) we propose 2050 as deadline	d) they propose 2020 as deadline*
e) climate reality	e) climate show

The utterances marked with an (*) in (b) and (d) are not explicitly stated propositions in the news articles, but can be added deductively. Intuitively, people understand more in these arguments than is being said explicitly. Moreover, looking at lexical items, reveals a systematic choice of words all carrying negative connotations when describing EU proposals on climate change such as 'short term', 'inordinate sacrifice', 'trivial', 'hollow cores', 'climate show' or 'expensive' and 'ineffective.' This is contrasted with 'our' proposed actions, which are labelled as 'viable and long term', 'smart and equitable', 'real, hard emission targets', and as representing 'climate reality'. This strategy of polarization enforces a specific reading especially so if one also takes into consideration the intertextual reference to various promises the EU has apparently made.

4.2.2 Speech Acts: A Promise is a Promise is a Promise

The basis of speech act theory (Austin 1962; Searle 1969, 1979) is the assumption that when people say something they are doing something, that language in use has a performative dimension. Utterances are used to perform actions as well as to communicate propositions true or false. Talking or writing about what was being said is action on several levels. The main level or focus of attention in speech act theory is the illocution or communicative intent of an utterance. Sometimes people announce their illocutionary intentions using (explicit) performative verbs such as 'promise', 'declare', 'baptize', 'name' or 'order'.

In various articles about the EU's climate change objectives, the notion of 'promise' is taken up. Some articles do so more indirectly, often, however, the commissive speech act 'to promise' is explicitly spelled out. The article 'Global warming's dirty secret' by Lomborg (2007: A16), for example, has 737 words

and features the verb 'to promise' five times and the noun 'promise(s)' four times, i.e. this speech act displays a high frequency and is thus an important discourse marker. Here are just two examples of its usage:

(12)
With European Commission president José Manuel Barroso claiming that Europe will lead the way on climate change, the EU **has promised** to cut CO2 emissions by 20% below 1990-levels by 2020. Of course, with the EU already **having promised** an 8% cut by next year in the Kyoto Protocol, this new target seems slightly less ambitious.

First of all, in (12) the truthfulness of Barroso's utterance is questioned by employing the verb ' to claim' instead of, for example, 'he said', 'he stated' or 'he emphasized'. In addition, a tone of mockery accompanies these statements ('Of course, … this new target seems slightly less ambitious.').

The lexical item 'promise' is one of the strongest illocutionary force-indicating devices for commitment provided by the English language. The author foregrounds and emphasizes the degree of commitment of the EU by explicitly referring to particular EU statements/actions as promises. The essential feature of a promise is that the promisor undertakes an obligation to perform a certain act. However, the author finishes his article as follows:

(13)
But it [the new global warming agreement] will do virtually no good, at high cost, and - as with many other **lofty promises** from the EU – it will carry a high probability of failure. Let us hope that the rest of the world will keep its cool and propose a better, cheaper and more effective solution for the future.

According to speech act theory certain minimum requirements must be met if an illocution such as 'to promise' is to be successful, i.e. all speech acts have their conditions of appropriateness. The illocutionary speech act 'promise' must thus meet some 'felicity conditions' (Searle 1969) to be successful. The core notion of the high frequency of the speech act 'promise' and the sarcasm and irony associated with its usage with respect to the EU's climate change objectives suggest that one of the felicity conditions is violated. According to Searle (1969), the sincerity condition explicates the psychological condition expressed in the speech act 'to promise', that is, the speaker must honestly be willing to fulfil the promise. Looking at the representation of the EU's promises it is clear that both the EU and its promises are perceived as insincere. The EU will not hold up its end of the bargain because generally there is a 'high probability of failure' for promises made by the EU. With respect to modality, the high certainty of this outcome is indicated also by the use of the modal verb 'will' and enhanced by lexical choices ('lofty', 'high probability' and 'failure').

Of course, the EU is not a 'speaker' but rather an economic and political union of 27 member states and can thus not perform a speech act or have a psychological condition as described above. However, the EU is represented by people who speak on behalf of it such as the European Commission president José Manuel Barroso or the German chancellor Angela Merkel whose country held the EU presidency from January 1, 2007 to June 30, 2007. The EU is anthropomorphized into a speaker (e.g. 'the EU has

promised to cut CO2 emissions by 20% below 1990-levels by 2020'). Therefore, EU policies and pronouncements can be seen as performative.

The Euro-sceptical discourse tries to undermine the official EU line on climate change and its role as a possible model to follow. In its argumentation it challenges the self-image of the EU as a leader in international climate change negotiations and thus also opposes the pro-EU discourse by telling the readers that the EU proposals are not well thought through, costly and ineffective. In fact, after the G8 'compromise' on climate change in June 2007 in Germany the tables are fundamentally turned in that the EU is represented as being defeated and as losing its traditional role as 'green champion' to George W. Bush and the U.S.

4.2.3 Process Types: Agency and Intent

Michael Halliday (e.g. 1973, 1978, 1985; Halliday and Hasan 1985) developed a descriptive and interpretative framework for viewing language as a strategic, meaning-making resource. His approach came to be known as the 'systemic-functional model'. This model views language as a semiotic system and claims that language cannot be studied without reference to meaning. Any use of language is motivated by a purpose. An essential concept of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is that each time language is used, in whatever situation, the users are making choices. These choices are essentially choices about meaning but they are expressed through choices from within the systems of formal linguistic features made available by the language.

According to SFL scholars such as Halliday (1985) and Givón (1993), the two main elements by which representations of reality can be rendered intelligible are 'process' and 'participants'. Realities are constructed in terms of what happens or is the case and by or to whom. Halliday distinguishes between three major processes realized in the system, and participant roles that are associated with them accordingly. These processes are classified with respect to whether they represent actions, states of mind, or states of being. In an action, for example, an agent actively initiates or/and causes an action. An agent is the participant who is occupying the subject position in a clause, and who is typically a human acting deliberately upon something or somebody.

The lexical choices in the following example from an article on the climate summit in June 2007 are significant and ideologically loaded ('failure', 'diplomatic defeat' and 'shrinking influence'). However, not only lexical choices but also grammatical structures can show the ideological orientation of the media:

(14)
Bush has taken on Europe's role as green champion by insisting that China and India join any climate alliance [...] The failure of Germany and its European Union partners to push through their key goals stands for a diplomatic defeat that epitomizes Europe's shrinking influence in international climate negotiations [...] Now, **President Bush has decided** to don Europe's traditional role as a green champion. Now, it's **the United States that is demanding** more action on climate change [...]. **[Bush] has now seized** the initiative on climate politics and **is setting the agenda** for international negotiations. (Peiser 2007: FP15)

It might not come as a surprise that the quotations in (14) are from the *National Post*, one of only two national newspapers in Canada. The *Post* is very conservative in its orientation and takes a pro-American stance. It has also been labelled 'ultra-nationalist' and 'right wing'. The majority of texts that comprise the Euro-sceptical discourse continuum are circulated through the *National Post*.

What is obvious in example (14) is the U.S influence upon the presentation of the contents stemming from the newspapers official pro-American position. Moreover, looking at how President Bush is portrayed in terms of agency and intent, one finds that he is being constructed as an active agent deliberately doing an action:

- 'Bush **has taken on** Europe's role'
- 'President Bush **has decided** to don Europe's traditional role as a green champion.'
- '[Bush] **has now seized the initiative** on climate politics and **is setting the agenda**.'

These active constructions make the actor, President Bush, the first element in the clause and thereby place considerable emphasis on him. Furthermore, with the 'United States' synecdochically referring to the President of the United States (*totum pro parte*) in the phrase 'it's the United States that is demanding more action on climate change', this, too, can be read as 'Bush *is demanding* more action'. Here are two more phrases from the same article displaying the same syntactic choices, namely action processes with Bush as the active agent:

- 'Bush **has now taken on the role** as suave intermediary between Europe and Asia'
- 'Bush **has recast** the United States as a 'green' bridge-builder'

These linguistic choices are ideologically significant. They foreground the involvement of Bush in the event represented and thus his responsibility. The attribution of agency and process projects him and the United States as capable leaders in the climate change debate which is contrasted with the EU's 'failure' to 'push through' their proposed targets and their 'shrinking influence in international climate negotiations'. Consequently, such a representation contributes to a view of the EU as inept, incapable and as acted upon.

4.2.3.1 A Different Representation

There are always different ways of encoding or representing experiences of a particular event. Choices people make are motivated by, for example, cultural, ideological and political factors. Critical as well as systemic linguists claim that the syntax of a language provides for alternative phrasings and that wherever in language alternatives are allowed, different values and belief sets come to be associated with different variants (Fowler 1991: 77). Along the same line of reasoning, Fairclough (1992: 179) notes:

> There are processes and participants - animate and inanimate - in reality, and there are processes and participants in language, but we cannot simply extrapolate from the nature of a real process to the way it is signified linguistically. On the contrary, a real process may be signified linguistically in a variety of ways, according to the perspective from which it is interpreted.

Looking at the coverage of the same discursive event, the climate summit in June 2007 in Germany, a *Globe and Mail* editorial shows that in producing texts there is always more than one option. In example (15) below the decision not to agree with the proposed EU targets is not represented as 'failure' or a 'diplomatic defeat' on part of the EU:

> (15)
> That vague commitment dashed European hopes of an agreement to reduce emissions to 50 per cent below 1990 levels by 2050. But the mere fact they agreed to pursue further cuts kept hopes for a longer-term deal alive. As well, U.S. President George W. agreed to bring his plan to convene talks with the top 15 emitters [...]. (2007: A24)

Lexical choices include more positively connoted words such as 'commitment' (although somehow mitigated by the modifier 'vague') and 'hopes'. Moreover, although President Bush is still constructed as an active agent who is doing the process expressed by the verb phrase, namely, 'to agree', this syntactic structure invites a different interpretation then the one in example (14) above. To agree to something or somebody presupposes a first move, i.e. Bush is not so much the exclusive initiator of an action but rather reacts to some action instigated by somebody or something else. Consequently, this representation does not overtly foreground Bush as the 'green champion' and sole saviour of the climate change talks. It rather invites an interpretation of the climate change talks as a compromise sought by all participating parties.

5. Conclusion

The roles ascribed to the EU with regard to its responsibilities in international climate change in the Canadian media range from international actor, over world leader to 'being acted upon' and thus losing international influence. According to Larsen (2004: 69), the EU 'is an international actor if it constructs itself as one vis-à-vis the rest of the world and if other international actors conceive of it as such.' As the examples in this study have shown, the anti-EU discourse, which is mostly circulated through the conservative press, does not articulate the EU as an international actor let alone world leader in climate change which allows the conclusion that the EU is not conceived as such by at least one segment of the Canadian press. At the same time, a pro-EU discourse contests that image and ascribes leadership status to the EU by attributing role model qualities to it.

Communicating and representing climate change is a very complex activity in which many different stakeholders engage for a variety of purposes and in order to achieve various results. The media are one of those stakeholders. They are not 'neutral' agents, but rather hold a position in the ideological and political structure of a given society. The identification and analysis of external, i.e. Canadian media images of the EU, is vital not only for the

construction of the EU's internal identity but also for future EU-Canada relations. The media are the primary source of information on the EU, its peoples, institutions and policies. It is therefore important to understand how beliefs about and attitudes towards the EU are constructed outside the EU. How language is mediated in the Canadian press is of utmost importance since it is socially shaped; but it is also socially shaping and will thus influence decision-making regarding the EU.

A future discursive analysis could head, for example, towards a comparative transatlantic study of the roles and identities ascribed to the EU in terms of topics such as human rights, the constitutional debate/the Lisbon Treaty or international negotiations. First, one could identify the dominating topics and themes in various newspapers. What makes the news, and what not? It has been demonstrated that topics, which are incongruent with a newspaper's interests and ideology, can be downplayed or omitted altogether (van Dijk 1988). Second, an analysis of how common topics and themes in different newspapers are organized and represented can reveal not only differences in journalistic practices, but also differences in ideology. A comparative analysis of news texts in terms of their lexical and semantic features, in terms of process types and participant roles in discourse, modality, or labelling can reveal (differing) value hierarchies, sets of beliefs and preoccupations of the people, groups of people or institutions being represented.

In general, Critical Discourse Analysis has a large area of prospective study. Since text and talk are used and mediated in all social contexts the areas in which discourses can be analyzed are as manifold as the analytical tools used in CDA. CDA looks at how texts construct, maintain or change representations of the world, social identities and social relationships. This has made possible the detailed study of numerous discourses in many social domains. Bell (1991: 4) notes some reasons why one should study media discourse:

> Language in the media
>
> - can reveal something about the media's structure and values,
> - reflects societal and cultural aspects and conventions, and
> - affects attitudes and opinions through the way it presents people and issues

I would like to add that media analysis is particular important since media representations are such a major element in the daily life of people and the daily experience of language.

Notes

[1] The mainstream media are said to be agents of hegemony and 'the fourth power'. In this respect critical analysts follow Gramsci (1971), who conceptualizes power as hegemony. Hegemony can be seen as the 'glue' that binds society together without the use of force. It is leadership and domination across the political, economic, ideological and cultural domains of a society. Hegemonic power is social power, i.e. it makes people act as if it is

natural, normal or simply a consensus. Such forms of hegemonic power are implemented through discourse. Consequently, hegemonic power struggles are struggles over the articulation of discursive practices.

[2] Koopmans and Erbe present a systematic approach for the investigation of EU related media coverage from inside the EU distinguishing what they refer to as 'three forms of Europeanisation of public political communication': supranationally, vertically and horizontally. The first refers to communication and interaction between European-level institutions and collective actors, e.g. between the European Parliament and the European Commission. The second addresses communicative linkages between the national and European level, such as that which is between a national actor (e.g. any representative of Germany, Italy, Spain, etc.) and a European institution like the European Court of Justice or the European Parliament. Finally, horizontal Europeanisation represents the direct or indirect communication between EU member states.

[3] For an exception: A survey on The External Image of the European Union was coordinated by Sonia Lucarelli at the Forum on the Problems of Peace and War (Florence) in the framework of the Network of Excellence Global Governance, Regionalisation and Regulation: the Role of the EU – GARNET (EU 6th Framework Programme 2005–2010; call identifier: FP6-2002-Citizens-3). Its results are published in a special issue of the European Foreign Affairs Review 12(3).

[4] Bell (1991: 14-15) notes that the boundaries between soft and hard news are often unclear and sometimes deliberately blurred. A writer's personal opinion is generally restricted to editorials, letters to the editor, reviews and columns, which make up the category 'opinion'. As with soft and hard news, opinion and news are supposed to be kept separate ('objectivity' of news reporting or 'facts'). Yet, fact and opinion are more often than not 'mixed' (Bell: 13).

[5] Doug Saunders article 'Canada-EU trade proposal rivals scope of NAFTA', for example, received 304 online comments in only two days.

[6] Canada currently has a Conservative government with Stephen Harper as Prime Minister.

[7] NGO's such as Human Rights Watch, for example, are quoted as saying, 'The European Union should take the lead in promoting respect for human rights internationally [...]' and it 'should be the strongest and most effective defender of human rights' (Gedda 2007: A5). In terms of protecting dwindling shark stocks, a representative of the Shark Alliance noted that 'the EU was key in determining not only what happened to sharks in its own waters but also because of its "strong influence" on nations around the world' (Agence France-Presse 2007: E13).

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