Corporate discourse
A themed session of the Language, Ideology and Power research group

**When:** 2 March 2015, 3-4.30pm  
**Where:** Bowland North seminar room 23  
**What:** three presentations by PhD students

**Jeremy Holland and Elena Nichele (Lancaster University)**

*An ideological content analysis of corporate manifestos: A foundational document approach*

This project involves a socio-linguistic look at corporate discourse in the form of mission statements. It utilizes Holland’s (2014) foundational document model (FDM) as a theoretical framework for performing ideological content analyses. The FDM is a semantic grammatical model consisting of five sociological categories (ethical norms, folklore narrative, utopian schemes, strategic planning, and role attribution). Stark contrasts are observed between manifestos produced by the two most successful companies in the soft beverage industry (Coca-Cola and PepsiCo.). The comparative analysis performed in this study shows great potential regarding a possible extension and application of Holland’s framework for those primary texts utilized when mobilizing collective action.

**Catharina Müller (University of A Coruña, Spain)**

*A methodological approach to the analysis of CSR in business discourse*

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) can be defined as part of the strategic management of a company: as the voluntary self-commitment to act in an ethical and responsible manner in the social, economic and environmental dimension, beyond legislative demands. Recent literature calls for more discussion of CSR and power, of credibility and transparency, and of CSR as discourse that creates the influential phenomenon of CSR and constructs its meaning. A closer examination of CSR discourse from a linguistic point of view can help to understand how language and its manifestation in business discourse define the social relations of power and ideology.

I propose a five-step coding system to examine CSR reports, through qualitative and quantitative mechanisms, for ideological and persuasive language use. My approach is mainly based on, and adapted from, studies of Modality, Speech Act Theory, Transitivity, and Social Actor Analysis. The proposed coding system comprises a categorization of utterances by (i) if responsibility is expressed, (ii) which CSR topic it refers to, (iii) who is the social actor responsible, (iv) how is this social actor represented linguistically, and (v) what is the pragmatic force of corporate responsibility in the utterance. A critical and interpretive methodological approach to public business discourse is the instrument in order to observe and demonstrate the relationship between society and transnational corporations in a context of globalization and outsourcing.
Anne Murphy (Lancaster University)

*English and Power: Voices from the corporation*

*English and Power* is a corporate learning and development programme and a process for doing sociolinguistic leadership research. At a practical level, the workshop helps people to strip back the meaning in meetings and interactions and develop a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics of power and how this is established, maintained, and challenged. In terms of research, the preparatory and workshop activities elicit narrative data about shifting professional identities and about the lived experience of influence and inclusion.

In this session I will explain the steps and activities involved in the *English and Power* programme in more detail, concentrating first on the intervention as a learning and development event. I will then go on to give an overview of the sociolinguistic analysis of some of the data from the five programmes run in Spain and Portugal between April 2013 and November 2014. Finally I will ask to what extent the *English and Power* programme is able to live up to its critical potential by providing a legitimate corporate space to raise questions about power.