

Climate Futures in Multimodal Social Media Discourse: A Linguistic Perspective on the Modelling Character of Multimodal Ensembles

Conversations about the relevance of humanities research for socio-ecological transition require interdisciplinary approaches to investigate how culture ‘models’ climate futures. The trinational project *Just Futures? An Interdisciplinary Approach to Cultural Climate Models (CCM)* addresses this desideratum by investigating climate imaginaries in different domains while utilizing an innovative interdisciplinary methodology. The project group brings together literary studies, linguistics, science and technology studies (STS), and literature pedagogy to investigate how different texts move between seemingly neutral climate facts (‘models of’) and normative social values (‘models for’). The linguistic part of the project examines discursive debates of *climate change* and *future imaginaries* on social media:

Prior to a qualitative linguistic analysis, a quantitative STS approach will identify trends related to keywords and actors across platforms and determine *visual trends* concerning the shaping of climate change conversations in and through social media. In order to shed light on *textual*, *narrative*, and *semantic trends*, we apply both qualitative and multimodal linguistic methods: We identify a small number of posts that represent wider narrative trends and demonstrate how actors are shaping conversations and bringing new meanings into being. This might lead to new combinations of digital methods and multimodal linguistic discourse analysis.

The qualitative multimodal linguistic analysis focusses on thematic, syntactic, semantic and functional aspects of different modes, illustrating the modelling character of multimodal ensembles for climate futures; i.e. which forms of representation and functions of participation can be found. This entails consideration of discourse-linguistic/rhetoric meta-categories and key concepts, as well as argumentative, strategic and humorous aspects. Furthermore, we aim to discover how various modes (of multimodal ensembles) provide context to each other. This includes the social contexts beyond the linguistic surface that give specific meaning(s) to a post and serve as underlying concepts and patterns of communicative practices.

CCM and its linguistic approach contribute to the interdisciplinary understanding of how cultural forms such as literature, social media, and educational writing model climate change. For social media research, that is to move beyond the current focus on misinformation toward positive social action on climate change.

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