



Communication for the Commons

Revisiting Participation and Environment

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Editors

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Revisiting Participation and Environment

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Our mission is to foster effective and inspiring communication that alleviates environmental issues and conflicts, and solves the problems that cause them. We do this by bringing together and supporting practitioners, teachers, scholars, students, artists and organizations that share these goals.

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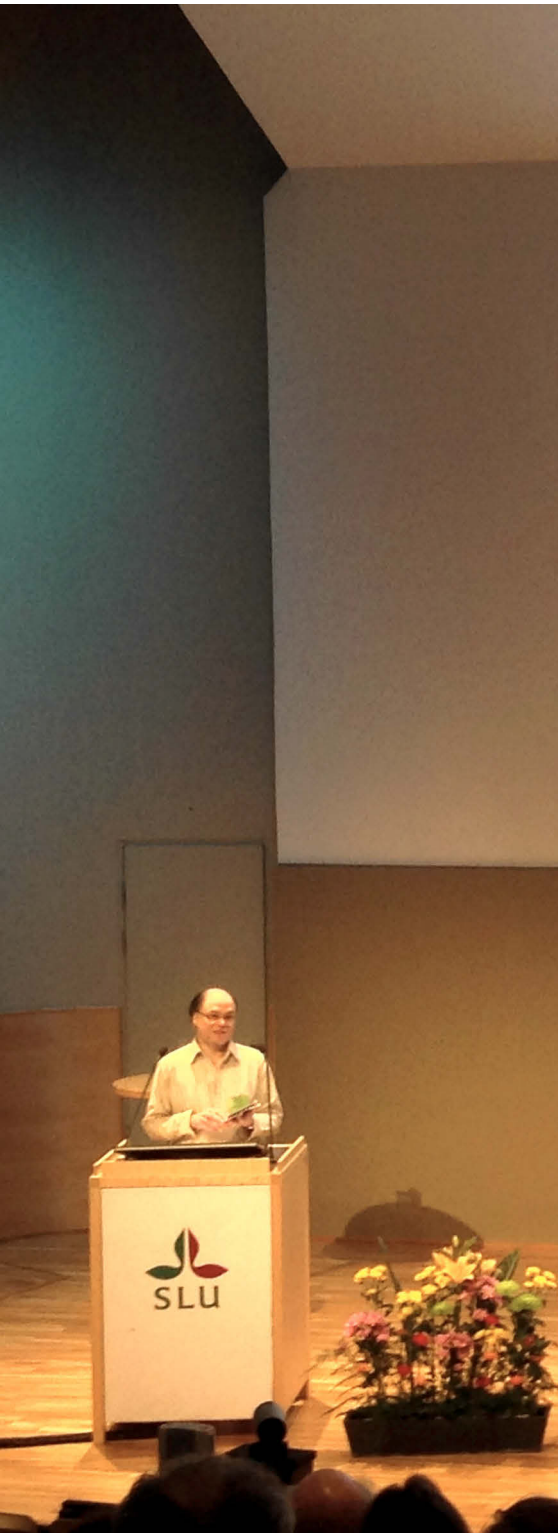


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Can Stakeholders Hold the Commons? English as the Global Language of Capitalism and that of Sustainability: Contradictions and Potentials

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This paper investigates the role of English as a *Lingua Franca* in the international communication concerning environmental issues. The case studies analysed focus on Anglicisms in Italian texts dealing with environment-related issues. Contrasting hypotheses are presented in order to investigate their respective validity, to understand how they coexist, and what can be done in terms of discourse strategies in order to improve environment-friendly communication. A taxonomy of four strategies is proposed – International, Creative, Oppositional, Professional – in the attempt to pin down the different goals communicators are pursuing when they insert Anglicisms in their texts. This is then applied to the analysis of environmental communication in general and its framing, hypothesising two main communicative approaches: one targeted at citizens, the other at consumers and stakeholders.

Key words: English as a *Lingua Franca*, Anglicisms in Italian, Green Marketing, Commons, Framing

Introduction

The aim of the present paper is to investigate the role of English as a *Lingua Franca* in international communication concerning environmental issues. The analysis concentrates both on the use of Anglicisms in other languages (focusing on Anglicisms in Italian) and the use of English as the common language for international environment-related communication. In order to do so, it is necessary to start from a reflection on the role played by English in the world of global marketing and business communication.

It is a fact that in history no other language has ever been as widespread as English is nowadays: this can either be welcomed as a new possibility for humanity or as proof of dangerous linguistic imperialism. These antithetical views have been the object of study by many scholars: this paper refers to the works of Crystal (2003) — as representative of a mainly positive attitude towards English as a global language — and those of Phillipson (1992), who argues against the mechanisms of power hidden in the concept of a *Lingua Franca*.

Crystal (2003) identifies the main historical reasons that made and conserved English as the global language: in the nineteenth century the supremacy of Britain as “the world’s leading industrial and trading country” (p. 10), and its political imperialism, and later the economic hegemony of the new American superpower in the twentieth century. Hence, industrial growth and the stock market are the elements that have helped English establish its supremacy. It has been argued that English is the language of capitalism (Block, Gray, & Holborow, 2012; Fairclough, 2006) and, as a consequence, one could analyse it as the language of power and the cultural symbol that represents the approaching environmental breakdown. But

this view would prove simplistic, and this paper aims to investigate other and antithetical cultural symbolisms associated with the English language.

The same clash of views appears to be present in the use of Anglicisms in Italian; hence, contrasting hypotheses are presented here in order to investigate their respective validity and to understand how they coexist and what can be done in terms of discourse strategies in order to improve environment-friendly communication.

The first hypothesis is that in some cases the presence of Anglicisms can be considered as an alert to greenwashing strategies, or at least some non-totally transparent green marketing strategy (see Caimotto & Molino, 2011). In other cases, the use of English is a strategy that helps companies promoting their business activities that really are environmentally friendly (Caimotto, forthcoming). We must remember the older symbolisms of English as the language of political liberty; hence, the second hypothesis takes into account the positive communication potential of Anglicisms (Crystal, 2003). Meanwhile, it is also important to bear in mind that in some cases the use of English is dictated by a general identification of English as the language of business and marketing, without prior planning or ideological goals (Stubbs, 2001). This kind of usage, though, is also likely to engender implications and specific framing (Lakoff, 2010); it is the aim of this work to identify and analyse such implications together with their effects and to elaborate strategies that might lead to a more conscious and focused use of Anglicisms and of English as a global language, as far as green communication is concerned.

In order to achieve this result, several communicative situations are taken into account and analysed, starting from the observation of the use of Anglicisms in different Italian contexts. Drawing on previous research (Caimotto & Molino, 2011; Caimotto, forthcoming) the aim here is to create a taxonomy of environment-related communicative practices in order to identify their characteristics and establish what works and what does not in terms of both effectiveness and transparency.

The first case study focuses on various companies that took part in a national fair held yearly in Milan, “Fa’ la cosa giusta” (“Do the right thing”), which describes itself as the fair “of critical consumption and sustainable lifestyles” at its tenth annual in 2013. Then another case study is presented: that of Termointer, a company based in Northern Italy operating in the business of cogenerators, also known as CHP (combined heat and power). All these situations involve the contradictions discussed above, as they require marketing strategies, raise environment-related issues, and imply various degrees of economic interest.

The Myths of English

The implications of the use of English as the language of communication are engendered by the narratives associated with the language and to the cultures forming the Inner Circle (Kachru, 1988). To these, we must add the culture of globalization and the concept of English as a Lingua Franca. Depending on which narrative we are referring to, the English language can represent either a symbol of environmental and ecological destruction or a symbol of rural idyll and democratic ideals. In order to understand how such contrasting narratives can coexist in a whole, Lakoff’s (2010) work on framing the environment can prove useful.

According to Lakoff (2010), the ways in which we conceive the environment suffer from severe hypocognition (p. 76), i.e. we lack the ideas we need in order to communicate environment-related issues effectively. In Lakoff’s (2010) words, “The economic and ecological meltdowns have the same cause, namely, the unregulated free market with the idea that greed is good and that the natural world is a resource for short-term private enrichment” (p. 77). A company that foregrounds its economic interests to the detriment of its environmental impact is to be considered on the wrong side in terms of green

credentials. But a company cannot be entirely oblivious of the economic sustainability of any of its projects. Hence, what a critical consumer needs to do is to understand whether the company's economic interest will be placed before the environmental issues or not. Unfortunately, this requires good technical knowledge that most lay people do not have. Thus, people who care about the environment sometimes make the mistake of judging a company negatively simply because it will earn good money from its environmentally friendly business.

Lakoff (2010) writes about the new frame of The Regulated Commons as a possible solution to improve the issue of hypocognition. The Regulated Commons consist of "the idea of common, non-transferable ownership of aspects of the natural world, such as the atmosphere, the airwaves, the waterways, the oceans, and so on" (Lakoff, 2010, p. 78). As the idea of the Commons was an important aspect of the Magna Carta (Linebaugh, 2008), we see a further connection to English-speaking culture.

Still, we are also well aware of the cultural role played by the United States as the country of capitalism, which – as explained by Lakoff (2010) – is directly connected to environmental issues. English is considered the language of international business communication and several scholars point out the negativity associated to this language. Among the most well-known we find Phillipson (2008), who argues that English is a *lingua frankensteinia* (a language of power, elitism, exclusion, and a killer of other languages) rather than a *lingua franca*, and certainly not what the adjective *franca* appears to suggest, i.e. "a language of international understanding, human rights, development, progress, etc." (Phillipson, 2008, p. 251). Likewise, Dieter (2004, p. 140) argues that the language of marketing is what he labels as BSE – Bad Simple English – the culturally destructive language employed for international business communication.

In her analysis of International Marketing Textbooks, Kelly-Holmes (2010) demonstrates how these manuals, which are supposed to argue in favour of international communication and cultural exchange, often imply that "multilingualism is perceived as a chaotic, dangerous and bewildering prospect", while English is often described as the norm, the rescuer that "brings harmony to the world" (p. 196). The manuals also imply that English is the best language of choice when communicating abroad. Moreover, Kelly-Holmes (2010) shows a general tendency to judge language professionals negatively and to expect non-native speakers to be unable to understand jargon or complex sentences. Her observations are relevant to our purposes because the positivity towards monolingualism contributes to the image of English as a destructive, *frankensteinian* language.

One more element that needs to be brought into the picture is that of the spread of corporate discourse to other social domains, illustrated by Mautner (2010) who theorises that "the more powerful the agents behind a text or text type are, the more likely they are to be emulated through accommodative acts" (p. 223). As corporate discourse is associated to the English language, it is easy to see how the two are related and tend to influence spheres that do not appear to benefit from a corporate-like approach. Mautner (2010) analyses the examples of higher education, public administration, religion, and the personal sphere, and shows how discourse in these domains has been influenced by a corporate and business approach, thus creating hybrid discourse that at times is at odds with the domain itself.

In a similar fashion, we can add environmentalism to the list. The first environmentalist movements in the '60s and '70s were characterised by a kind of typical oppositional discourse. Nowadays, environmentalism is growing increasingly institutionalised, and the discourse changes accordingly. Environmentally-friendly activities seek legitimization and attempt to achieve it also through discourse strategies influenced by the corporate realm. This attitude generates contradictions that hinder communication, as activities that can be considered genuinely environment-friendly may present themselves as excessively business-oriented and thus might be perceived as environmentally dangerous.

The Myth of English as the Language of Freedom, Rebellion, and Modernism

As Crystal (2003) points out, English has played a prominent role as the language of the quality press (p. 91), of BBC radio – “inform, educate and entertain” (p. 96) – and the language of protesters all over the world, using English to address a global audience. Moreover, he argues, as the lyrics of Bob Dylan, Bob Marley, John Lennon, Joan Baez and others spread around the world, English became a symbol of freedom, rebellion, and modernism for the younger generation in many countries (Crystal, 2003, p. 103).

It is possible to find examples of this use of English on the Italian websites of environmental movements such as Greenpeace. The Anglicisms employed convey a feeling of modernity and remind the reader of young people’s jargon. They can thus be considered part of a persuasion strategy and their analysis aims to focus better on the use of Anglicisms in such texts, bearing in mind the evident contrast with the role played by Anglicisms in the business-oriented communications described above.

Moreover, it was in Britain that the Magna Carta – the historical document still celebrated as the first example of the recognition of human rights – was drawn up. The Magna Carta was accompanied by another much less celebrated, but also extremely important, document known as “The Charter of the Forest”. As Linebaugh (2008) explains:

Whereas the first charter concerned, for the most part, political and juridical rights, the second charter dealt with economic survival. Historians have always known the Charter of the Forest existed but many of its terms - for example estovers, or subsistence wood products - seem strange and archaic, and have prevented the general public from recognizing its existence and understanding its importance. (p. 6)

According to Cowell (2012), “affinity for the landscape, especially in its 'traditional' forms, runs deep in British collective culture and psyche” and a “new commons” approach potentially offers solutions to today’s environmental problems (para. 2). Danny Boyle’s opening ceremony for the 2012 Olympic games in London foregrounded the ancient love of British people towards the countryside and the cultural clash brought by industrialization; the success that his show obtained proved that this contrast is still extremely relevant.

Illegitimate Greenwashing and Legitimate Green Marketing

The economic system of the so-called Western countries has been the object of considerable discussion in recent years, especially after the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008, which is considered the event that triggered the current economic crisis; the capitalist system has often been criticized and considered “unsustainable” in the long run. Given the central role of capitalism and of the globalization of the economy, marketing techniques have often been accused of maintaining and promoting the capitalist *status quo*, and hence have been identified as anti-environmental (el-Ojeili & Hayden, 2006).

Linguists know that the same communication strategy can be employed both for a specific goal and for its opposite (Conoscenti, 2011, p. 73-91). As unlimited consumption and the creation of superfluous needs are by definition in conflict with real sustainability – which aims to reduce needs and consumption to the minimum – any business activity seems doomed to some degree of contradiction (See also Poli, 2011 for a critique of the concept of “sustainable development”).

Following van Dijk's (2006) work on persuasion and manipulation, this paper hypothesises a continuum between illegitimate greenwash and legitimate green marketing (see also Caimotto & Molino, 2011). The OED definition for "greenwash" is:

Misleading publicity or propaganda disseminated by an organization, etc., so as to present an environmentally responsible public image; a public image of environmental responsibility promulgated by or for an organization, etc., regarded as being unfounded or intentionally misleading.

If we were to consider any marketing strategy as unfriendly towards the environment, analysis would hardly be able to enrich the debate. On the contrary, if we agree that some kinds of marketing persuasion can be accepted and sometimes even welcomed by environmentalists, we can then establish with greater clarity which ones can be considered environment-friendly strategies (Grant, 2007).

Green(wash)ing Anglicization

In the last few years it has been possible to observe, on the one hand, a growth in the public's awareness of and sensitivity towards environmental problems while, on the other hand, a growth in the amount of business activities that try to capitalize on this new sensitivity by marketing themselves as green. Consumers thus need critical tools to distinguish reliable companies from those who are greenwashing. The hypothesis presented here is that the observation of the use of Anglicisms in corporate communication in countries where English is not the first language (L1) – namely, countries included in Kachru's (1988) outer circle – can be employed as a critical tool to help the public establish what are the company's green credentials. Such findings can also be employed to observe the discourse strategies enacted and to draw conclusions to be employed also for the observation of green discourse in texts where English is the L1.

The first aspect that needs to be assessed is what is meant by Anglicism and Anglicization. Furiassi, Pulcini, and Rodríguez González (2012, p. 5-10) provide a complete overview of the various possible interpretations and state that "what counts as an Anglicism may be tailored to the scope of the research" (p. 5). Gottlieb's inclusive definition is probably the best suited for our purposes: "any individual or systemic language feature adapted or adopted from English, or inspired or boosted by English models, used in intralingual communication in a language other than English" (as cited in Furiassi et al., 2012, p. 5). According to Kelly-Holmes (2000):

The use of English in intercultural advertising is quite a unique case, since the English language has meaning, use and significance independent of the countries in which it is spoken. Thus, we see its use as a symbol of a national identity, of globalism, of youth, of progress and modernity; at one and the same time, it can bear the properties of pan-Europeanness/Americanness/globalism. (p. 76)

Given the wide array of explanations for the use of English in marketing and advertising, Kuppens' (2010, p. 116) categorization provides a good starting point: she explains that reasons can be grouped under three sets: the larger marketing strategy of using the same slogan worldwide in order to have a consistent brand image and cut costs; the creative-linguistic reasons that allow copywriters to create puns, fill lexical gaps and soften taboos; and, thirdly, the reasons related to cultural connotations. On this last point, Kuppens (2010) agrees with Kelly-Holmes' (2000) observation that, in intercultural advertising today, "the use value of languages has come to be obscured by their exchange or symbolic value" (Kelly-Holmes, 2000, p. 71) and works "even (or perhaps especially) because it is not understood" (p. 73).

But Kuppens (2010) also adds a new dimension to the analysis, taking into account case studies in which the choice for English cannot be explained by the three sets of reasons reported above, but rather in terms of intertextual reference to specific American and British media genres (p. 129). Among her findings, the most relevant to our purposes concerns the demands these advertisements make on their public: while slogans which are not meant to be understood by their target imply that the consumer will be uncritically attracted by the “luxury value” associated with English, the TV ads analysed by Kuppens (2010) draw on their public’s ability to link certain features to specific media genres (p. 131). Kuppens (2010) also points out that advertisers adopting English do not necessarily celebrate or admire the cultural values associated with it.

In a similar fashion, Piller (2001) takes into account the case of a non-profit advertisement that is implicitly critical of the use of English in German advertising; the message was created by a non-profit organization lobbying for the interests of bicyclist and the headline was based on a pun: *Rush hour = Rasch aua*. Piller’s (2001) explanation deserves to be quoted in full:

The German homophone of rush hour translates literally as ‘quick ouch’, so that the whole sequence may be read as ‘The rush hour quickly leads to injuries’. [...] The ADFC, which promotes bicycle use as an environmentally friendly alternative to automobile use [is] necessarily critical of the wasteful lifestyle of the rich capitalist market economies and consumer societies. [...] The use of the English term intertextually alludes to commercial advertising in which English is used precisely to endorse the values of capitalist market economies and consumer societies. [...] The use of English in the ADFC advertisement manages to point out the harmful consequences of such a lifestyle without specifying them in so many words. (p. 174)

This oppositional use of English is particularly relevant for our purposes, as it is linked precisely to the kind of capitalistic values that tend to be associated to the English language, but at the same time it exemplifies the apparent contradiction of using the English language in order to criticize the values it is associated with. Coming back to our overall purpose of establishing ways to detect greenwashing through the observation of Anglicization, the studies quoted above appear to confirm the dichotomy between the choice of using English to exploit its “use value”, i.e. the propositional meaning of the message, and that of exploiting its “exchange or symbolic value” (Kelly-Holmes, 2000, p. 71), thus capitalizing on the consumers’ admiration towards English and the fact they are unlikely to understand the message.

Previous research into how English is employed in Italian green marketing has highlighted two relevant characteristics that require further investigation in order to establish their validity as warning bells against greenwashing: one is the presence of English and Italian together to refer to the same concept, when Italian would suffice, the other one is the use of opaque terminology that does not have a specific semantic equivalent in Italian and is already characterised by opacity in the source language. As explained in Caimotto and Molino (2011), this is often the case with *stakeholder*.

One way of verifying these hypotheses is to observe how English is employed by companies that can actually be considered environmentally-friendly as they offer products or services that are not superfluous and their production methods are not highly polluting. In order to carry out this task, companies who took part in the tenth annual of the Italian fair of sustainable lifestyles were observed. These companies are expected to represent a good selection of business activities whose green credentials are reliable, as the fair is organized by Terre di Mezzo – a non-profit association active in the realm of critical consumption – and the exhibitors had to conform to a long list of requirements published on the fair’s website (Falacosagiusta, 2013).

The Italian Fair for Sustainable Lifestyles: A Case Study

According to previous findings (Caimotto, forthcoming), a higher prominence of Anglicisms on companies' websites corresponds to a stronger positive attitude towards capitalism and consumption, which, as explained, is in contrast with a genuinely environment-friendly approach. Thus, the level of prominence of English in the actual fair in Milan and on the websites of the exhibitors can be considered indicative both of the companies' reliability and of the validity of the hypothesis.

During a one-day visit to the fair on March 17th 2013, a qualitative observation of the stands, leaflets, posters, and catalogues was implemented in order to gather the required information and verify the hypothesis presented above. No cases of opaque use of English were detected, nor examples of an overwhelming amount or prominence of Anglicisms. The same can be said about the observation of the fair's catalogue. Cases of warning bells against greenwashing were not found: no cases of English and Italian together to express the same concept and no use of significantly opaque terms. On a general level, though, the presence of English was certainly evident, and many examples of Anglicization were detected, especially when looking at the titles, logos, and company names. In fact, drawing on the various works on Anglicisms quoted above, it was possible to establish four categories to which the Anglicisms detected belong: International, Creative, Oppositional, Professional.

As Kuppens (2010 p. 116) points out, brands often use English in their communication in order to cut costs and be understood beyond their national boundaries. Among the companies that were present at the fair, the Danish furniture company Flexa can be considered an example; their brand name evokes the English "flexibility": a particularly apt association as the company produces furniture items for children that can be modified following the new requirements of a child as s/he grows up. This kind of usage is here labelled "International": the goal of this strategy can either focus on the need to save money or that of influencing the consumer's identity as cosmopolitan.

The Creative category includes Anglicisms that employ English because of the possibilities it opens in terms of bilingual word puns and rhyming: an example is a shop called "SAVE, ScarpeAccessoriVEg", whose website address is www.saveshop.it. The shop sells shoes and accessories that look like leather ones but are not made out of animal hide. Reference to the English language is found in the acronym SAVE, the choice of the symbol "" and that of employing the shortened version of the word "vegan". The adjectives "vegano/a/i/e" exist in Italian, but the English "vegan" is also employed.

We see here a mix of choices in terms of word order: "ScarpeAccessoriVEg" respects the Italian rule of the adjective following the noun and it is this word order that allows the creation of the acronym. On the contrary, the website address respects the English word order with "save shop". "Shop" though is not the only word they employ, as they also repeatedly refer to the Italian pun "neg-ozio" on their Facebook page ("negozi" is the Italian for "shop" and "ozio" for "leisure").

The most interesting example of Oppositional use of English is found on the website of a communication agency called "Smarketing": an opposition that starts from their company name through the addition of the privative affix -s. The number of Anglicisms on their website is very low, yet on their home page we find an example of Oppositional use:

Un processo di liberazione: dall'immaginario dell'advertising, dal consumismo coatto, verso la felicità della decrescita, per la comunicazione come bene comune. (www.smarketing.it)

[A liberation process: from the imagery of advertising, from compulsory consumerism, towards the happiness of de-growth, for communication as a common good. (Translations are mine unless otherwise specified)] (para. 1)

Here, “advertising” is clearly employed to attach a negative connotation to the notion by preferring the English to its Italian correspondent “pubblicità”, thus evoking a world where the presence of English is excessive. One of the members has also published a book and, in its online presentation, he states explicitly that it is necessary to avoid using words in English just for the sake of it. Another example is found in their “Courses” section:

Se usi la parola *target*, non c'è verso, cominci a ragionare come un cecchino.
(Smarketing.it – italics in the original)

[If you use the word *target*, no way, you start thinking like a sniper.] (para. 4)

After the above observations, it might be surprising to discover that another prominent Anglicism on Smarketing’s website is “stakeholder”. In the “Skills” section the sub headline states:

Invece di lavorare *per* il cliente, preferiamo lavorare *con* lui per i suoi clienti e i suoi stakeholder. (Smarketing.it – italics in the original)

[Instead of working *for* our client, we’d rather work *with* him (sic) for his clients and his stakeholders.]

The explanation for this apparently surprising choice confirms what the present work is trying to demonstrate: the issue of English in green communication is far from simple and it is certainly not possible to identify some specific Anglicisms – like stakeholder – and state they are more likely to signal cases of greenwashing. On the contrary, what is possible is to identify discursive strategies and tools to recognize these. In this case, the syntax of the message does not exploit the advantages of opacity that the term stakeholder offers; here it is not necessary to pin down who the stakeholders actually are, as we do not even know who the agency’s customer is. Hence these stakeholders are simply hypothetical and the insertion of the Anglicism can rather be considered a way to share a certain kind of business identity with the potential customers, who are likely to recognize this term as typical of texts concerning their communication strategies.

In fact, this last example may rather be included under the label “Professional,” i.e. the insertion of an Anglicism as a strategy of identity formation (Piller, 2001, p. 180). In terms of green credentials, the Professional use of Anglicisms is likely to correspond to the most controversial examples of green marketing, as what companies are trying to achieve in this case is the construction of a business-oriented brand image, which – as explained above – clashes with the notion of degrowth. In order to observe these kinds of strategies and their consequences, another company that was present in the fair is analysed.

A mainly Professional use of Anglicisms was detected on the website “l’Ecolaio.” The company comprises two points of sale in Italy, selling various goods made from recycled materials such as stationery items, inkjet cartridges, and toys. The aim of their website is to sell their products, to advertise for their shops, but also to promote the possibility of opening a new point of sale as a partner. In the section presenting the latter possibility, many examples of Anglicisms can be found; this is likely due to their attempt to establish their identity as reliable business partners. Under the section “Apri il tuo store” (“open your store”), consisting of 485 words, the following English words/phrases can be found: business (4), format (3), Concept Store (2), start-up (2), store (2), partner (2), green (1), online (1), network (1), web (1), software (1).

The fact the company was at the fair is considered here an element of guarantee of its green credentials. In terms of communicative strategies, “format” is an Anglicism that deserves to be analysed. Here are the relevant occurrences within the section addressed at potential partners:

Non vi proponiamo un format, ma soluzioni flessibili.

[We do not offer a format, but flexible solutions]. (“Perché sceglierci,” para. 1)

Scarica il documento completo del Format con tutti gli elementi d'arredo.

[download the full document of the Format with all the furniture elements]. (“A modo tuo,” para. 3)

The reasons why this Anglicism appears significant is that “format” is first employed with a negative connotation, like “advertising” in the case analysed above, and later employed to designate the project offered. Once the website visitors open the “Format” document, they may notice that the slogan running under the logo is “qualche cosa in più di un semplice format” [something more than a simple format]; still, the title of the Italian brochure is “format stores 2013”, where again we notice a mixture of English words and Italian word order. We have here an example of poor framing (Lakoff, 2010), in which different communicative strategies related to Anglicisms have been employed within the same document and for the same word, thus engendering confusion.

This section has demonstrated that companies which can be considered environmentally-friendly tend to avoid an excessive use of Anglicisms and they do not take advantage of the potential opacity an English expression may offer. We must also bear in mind that nowadays the typical target of this kind of company is a “critical consumer,” which means that most of these people in Italy are likely to know English quite well, as they tend to be better off and more educated than the average consumer. In fact, this could prove to be a negative element as it might transform itself in a counterproductive strategy of exclusion of those potential consumers that do not belong to the elite niche.

This analysis has also shown that the influence of corporate discourse can be detected in this business sector too, especially when financial matters are being discussed. This use, that we have labelled Professional, is the most controversial one, and it is likely to hinder the effectiveness of a company’s green credentials as a consequence of its closer connection to a capitalist approach, as argued in the section that follows.

Citizens, Consumers, Stakeholders

In her abstract, Pillar (2001) states:

A shift from political identities based on citizenship to economic ones based on participation in a global consumer market can be observed, together with a concomitant shift from monolingual practices to multilingual and English-dominant ones. (p. 153)

This concept touches upon what links environment-related marketing strategies to the issue of English as a global language. Looking at the way English is employed in environment-related communication in Italian, we have identified two main tendencies, confirmed by previous studies about the use of Anglicisms in advertising. The trend which has been witnessed for a longer time and has been the object of a greater number of investigation is the one that sees English as a language devoid of its use value and employed only for its symbolic value. Kelly-Holmes (2000, p. 70) links this to Marx’s concept of the fetishization of commodities. The connection is very apt, as this use of English is representative of a capitalist approach and is found mainly in the marketing of businesses that favour a capitalistic logic.

The other trend concerning Anglicisms goes in the opposite direction: the English employed is meant to be understood by the public, not only for its symbolic value, but also for its communicative potential. On this side of the continuum we also find an oppositional use of Anglicisms in which the English language is employed to evoke and criticize the ideologies associated to the other trend, namely the use of English as an obfuscating strategy.

We can thus identify the first trend as mainly targeted at consumers – not required to understand but rather to accept the companies' marketing a-critically, thus favouring consumption – and the second trend as mainly targeted at citizens – responsible, critical, active interlocutors. This brings us to the connection between these two approaches and the concepts of Commons and Stakeholders.

The notion of the stakeholder has notably been the object of study and debate in the realms of Economics, Politics, and Environmentalism. The word itself engenders confusion and, in some cases, has been employed as an obfuscation strategy (Fairclough, 2000). It is a term that belongs to the logic of capitalism and private property, even if its novelty consists in taking into account advantages that can hardly be valued in monetary terms. On the contrary, the concept of common goods refers to citizens and is not meant to be limited to a specific group of people.

In terms of environmental framing, the concept of common goods is much more effective. If we think of a company polluting the territory where its industrial plants are, the local inhabitants will be considered part of the group of stakeholders. If the company follows a stakeholder logic, it will offer the inhabitants something to compensate for the loss of a non-polluted territory (jobs, investments in local infrastructures such as new roads, etc). The inhabitants will probably lack the necessary level of knowledge to contrast the power advantage of the company critically and will find themselves trapped in the no-win choice between health and economic survival.

A logic based on the concept of Commons, on the contrary, will require the company to avoid pollution anyway, as it removes the approach to the territory based on the concept of private property. As the environment is a complex and interconnected system, it is not possible to pollute a limited part of it, respecting the boundaries of private property, and that is why the framing on which environmental communication is based needs to be grounded on a commons logic. As Lakoff (2010) explains, a change in framing requires a long time and a complex process of reframing, but it appears to be the only long-term solution available.

It's the Common Good, Stupid!

This section aims to demonstrate the theory in the previous one by analysing another case, which has been the object of recent debate in Italy. The case is that of Termoinindustriale, a company based in Northern Italy and operating in the business of cogenerators, also known as CHP (Combined heat and power). The company was attacked together with one of its clients, Citterio, for the construction of a cogenerator in Felino, near Parma, in an area known for its long-established producers of hams and salami. In simple words, a cogenerator generates heat and power and can be fuelled by burning the production rejects on site, which in this case consist of animal oil. While the system is not zero-emission, the fact the rejects are employed to some end rather than wasted and the fact they do not need to be transported elsewhere by oil-consuming motor vehicles results in a lower impact from the environmental point of view.

But the local population and the other producers started a protest against Citterio in the attempt to impede the construction of the cogenerator. The documents of the local associations lobbying against the construction focus on two aspects: on the one hand, they present unreferenced theories about the dangers of the system without comparing them to the current state of things; on the other hand, they foreground the fact that Citterio would receive EU incentives for building the plant.

Italy is a country where the familiarity of the population with science-related issues remains too low (Corbellini, 2011), and the level of freedom of information is very problematic (RSF, 2013); thus, the population is ill-at-ease with the introduction of technological innovations, as lay people lack both the knowledge they would need in order to judge them as well as the possibility of trusting independent and

reliable sources of information. As explained by van Dijk, (2006, p. 361), this negative consequence of manipulative discourse typically occurs when the recipients are unable to understand the real intentions or to see the full consequences of the beliefs or actions advocated by the manipulator. This means that a company that wants to introduce technical innovations that impact the environment will need to frame its communication in terms of public benefit for the common good and downplay the economic advantages.

In the case analysed here, the response of the company was to send technical experts to the public debates to explain the technical advantages of the cogenerator, thus falling into what Lakoff (2010) labels “the trap of the Enlightenment Reason” (p. 72). The detractors, on the contrary, followed an approach which appealed mainly to people’s emotions, misnaming the cogenerator by calling it an “incinerator” and stating that “it burns the corpses of animals.” In terms of communication, Termindustriale’s website clearly follows a business-oriented approach and addresses potential customers. As a consequence, the economic advantages of cutting energy costs and receiving EU incentives are foregrounded: they are likely to have inspired part of the criticisms.

The observation of the use of Anglicisms on their website confirms the previous hypotheses: the English words employed belong to the business realm (e.g. partner, business, know-how, business plan, mission, problem solver, trading) and to the relevant technical jargon (e.g. Concentrated Solar Power, High Temperature, Medium Temperature, Organic Rankine Cycle).

The website does not try to present the advantages of their technologies from a more emotional point of view. Cases of blatant obfuscation of facts were not detected, but their pages are clearly addressed at potential customers and it is also very clear that they expect their public to be interested in the economic advantages first. This communicative approach is likely to trigger negative reactions in environmentally-minded citizens. Given the difficulties the company has had to face due to the negative reactions of local citizens, this case demonstrates that attention to framing, and improved communication strategies may prove more apt than economic advantages when it comes to building an ecological, sustainable economy.

Conclusions

The overall purpose of this work is not to promote more or less use of English in environment-related discourse, but rather to provide greater knowledge and awareness of its implications. When observing the presence of Anglicisms in Italian texts that deal with sustainability-related topics, two main trends can be recognized: on the one hand Anglicisms appear to be playing an obfuscating role, distancing the target public from the message; on the other hand, the presence of words in English can be considered an involving strategy, as those who recognise the language or understand its meaning feel included in the elite.

While the obfuscating strategy is likely to signal cases of greenwashing, i.e. texts that promote as environmentally-friendly products and services which are not, the involving strategy is also likely to be found in those texts where marketing strategies are employed in order to render the communication more effective. It would probably be impossible to draw a neat line to divide potentially manipulative cases of greenwashing from genuine cases of reliable environment-friendly communication. And it is certainly impossible to establish a list of “dangerous words” signalling greenwashing. As a consequence, what appears as the most reliable strategy to distinguish greenwashing-oriented Anglicisms from inclusive ones is to observe how they are employed in different communications and establish the degree of friendliness towards the environment through non-linguistic methods.

Thanks to this approach, a taxonomy of four strategies was proposed -- International, Creative, Oppositional, Professional – in the attempt to pin down the different goals communicators are pursuing when they insert Anglicisms in their texts. The Professional one was found to be the most controversial,

the one that companies should be more wary of using. As argued by Lakoff (2010), the whole issue requires complete reframing. Still, greater awareness of the implications of using English as a Lingua Franca in environment-related communication can only help to improve the way in which messages are created and transmitted. As this will influence the general perception of ecological issues and the consequent policies, the result will not be limited to efficient communication but will prove vital for our survival.

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