

# The EU Energy and Climate Package in the Media in January 2008. A Look at Intertextuality And Who Gets to Say How Things Stand

---

*Christa Uusi-Rauva and Janne Tienari  
Department of Languages and Communication  
Department of Organizations and Management  
Helsinki School of Economics*

*Artikkeli tarkastelee intertekstuaalisuutta Euroopan Unionin energia- ja ilmastopaketin julkistamisen yhteydessä tammikuussa 2008. Tarkastelun alla on erityisesti vuoropuhelu EU:n komission puhemiehen José Manuel Barroson puheen, kahdeksan eurooppalaisen mediatekstin ja ympäristöjärjestöjen lehdistötiedotteiden välillä. Osana isompaa tutkimusta tehty tarkastelu osoittaa, miten kyseiset mediatekstit heijastavat poliitikkojen näkemystä ilmastopaketista antamalla tilaa poliitikkojen äänelle ja jättämällä ympäristöjärjestöjen kritiikin huomioimatta. Lisäksi artikkeli havainnollistaa esimerkin kautta, miksi ympäristödiskursseja tarkastellessa on tärkeää analysoida intertekstuaalisia ketjuja. Tutkimus luo pohjaa laajemmalle tarkastelulle EU:n ilmastopaketin raportoinnista mediassa Euroopan eri maissa.*

**Key words:** environment, intertextuality, discourse, media, European Union.

## 1 Introduction

Environmental and climate change issues have undoubtedly risen to the center of international politics. At the same time, the media plays an increasingly significant role in contemporary society, as it promotes certain versions of social reality and marginalizes or excludes others (Fairclough 1995; van Dijk 1998; Macdonald 2003). This paper complements a growing body of discursive research on the ways in which the media represents environmental initiatives or issues (see e.g. Boykoff & Boykoff 2004, 2007; Antilla 2005; Carvalho 2005, 2007; Carvalho & Burgess 2005; Ereaut & Segnit, 2006; Alexander 2008; Boykoff 2008; Doulton & Brown 2009) by providing a cross-national comparison of eight media texts reporting on the European Union energy and climate package introduced in January 2008. Specifically, this paper looks at which actors are given voice in these media texts, pointing to the importance of analyzing intertextuality.

## **2 Material**

Texts reporting on the introduction of one of the most timely current environmental initiatives, the *European Union energy and climate package*, are the empirical focus of our study. The EU package, popularly known by the slogan “20 20 by 2020”, was introduced in January 2008, and it aims at a 20 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, a binding 20 percent target for the use of renewable energy sources, and a 20 percent increase in energy efficiency at the EU level by year 2020. In December 2008, the package was ratified by the European Parliament.

We analyze eight newspaper articles from eight different European media in four countries (the UK, Ireland, Sweden, and Finland), as demonstrated in table 1. This choice of countries is based on two criteria. First, we focus on countries that are to face some of the largest reductions in greenhouse gas emissions because of the EU energy and climate package. Second, we focus on countries that have been identified to differ in their orientations towards the EU (Jordan 2004; Flynn 2004; Kronsell 2004; Sairinen & Lindholm 2004). We focus on daily broadsheet newspapers due to their significance in moulding public opinion. The eight texts, which all represent the news genre, are immediate reactions to the EU package, published on the day following its introduction. If the papers had several articles on the EU climate package, we selected the article closest to the front page or the one posted first on the Internet, as previous studies have demonstrated that people are most likely to read articles closest to the front (Graber 1988, in Althaus & Tewksbury 2002). An exception to this was the text in Aamulehti, which had in essence the same content as a piece of news on Aamulehti’s front page, but was more detailed and therefore provided a richer text for analysis.

*The EU Energy and Climate Package in the Media in January 2008. A Look at Intertextuality And Who Gets to Say How Things Stand*

**Table 1.** Media text data

<b>Outlet</b>	<b>Article title</b>	<b>Publication date (2008)</b>	<b>Journalists</b>
<i>The Guardian</i> (UK)	<i>EU aims for moral high ground with swingeing climate change package</i>	Jan 24	Ian Traynor & David Gow
<i>The Daily Telegraph</i> (UK)	<i>EC's emissions targets could raise power prices by 15pc</i>	Jan 24	Russell Hotten
<i>The Irish Times</i> (Ireland)	<i>Government seeks change to EU emissions targets</i>	Jan 24	Harry McGee & Jamie Smyth
<i>The Irish Independent</i> (Ireland)	<i>Climate plan to cost €1bn per year but inaction 'will cost more'</i>	Jan 24	Gareth Morgan
<i>Aftonbladet</i> (Sweden)	<i>Kravet: Minska utsläppen med 17%</i> [Demand: Reduce emissions by 17%]	Jan 23	Johanna Melén
<i>Dagens Nyheter</i> (Sweden)	<i>Sverige ska minska sina utsläpp rejält</i> [Sweden to reduce emissions significantly]	Jan 24	Marianne Björklund
<i>Helsingin Sanomat</i> (Finland)	<i>EU:n energiapaketista tulossa kallis lasku kuluttajille</i> [EU energy package to result in expensive bill for consumers]	Jan 24	Annamari Sipilä & Heikki Arola
<i>Aamulehti</i> (Finland)	<i>Nyt alkoi energiansäästötalkoiden ja ilmastolaskun maksun aika</i> [The time for joint energy saving efforts and paying the climate bill began now]	Jan 24	Kirsi Hölttä

The texts are treated as examples that serve as a starting point for a more detailed analysis of how the EU energy and climate package is represented in the media. As such, they should not be seen as a 'representative sample' of texts on the climate package. In addition to these media texts, we provide illustrations from a speech by José Manuel Barroso (2008), given on the day of the introduction of the package, as well as illustrations from four press releases from environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (WWF UK and Greenpeace UK, Sweden and Finland). These examples by Barroso and the NGOs serve to demonstrate, in the context of the introduction of the climate package in January 2008, the power EU politicians are given in the chosen media texts by giving them voice and by excluding the voice of critics.

In the following, we first provide a summary of extant research on environmental discourses. We then present our analysis, substantiating our argument through empirical illustration. Finally, we offer conclusions based on our analysis.

### **3 Background to environmental discourses**

In environmental issues, the discursive strategies used by actors matter because how reality is constructed discursively can be a realm of power e.g. in the design of policies (Hajer 1995; Dryzek 1997). Since Hajer's study, many researchers have elaborated on environmental discourses. During the past decades, the dominant discourse has been that of sustainability, i.e. that economic growth and ecological preservation are possible simultaneously. In addition, the discourse of ecological modernization, which argues that being green can in fact lead to economic gains, has gained foothold. Both discourses, however, are criticized as they still place solving ecological problems within an economic framework. As an alternative, researchers (e.g. Dryzek, 1997; Prasad & Elmes, 2005) have called for more radical discourses that would challenge the economic structures currently prevalent in society. Insofar, however, discourses of green radicalism have not gained space in international media or politics.

In the context of the climate package, which is the first significant initiative since the Kyoto protocol that is aimed at fighting climate change, it is interesting to see how particular actors make strategic use of environmental discourses to further their aims and agendas. Also, if we accept that the media plays a significant role in contemporary society and global economy, how does the media adopt and develop particular discourses, represent actors' strategies in particular ways and, consequently, construct social reality vis-à-vis environmental issues such as energy use and climate change?

### **4 Focus: intertextuality**

In this paper, we focus on intertextuality, i.e. "what other texts are drawn upon [...] and how" (Fairclough 2003: 233). Specifically, we look at what voices are included by analyzing how direct and indirect quotes from actors are used. In addition, we pay attention to what voices are excluded from the texts. Analyzing e.g. quotations helps in placing texts within intertextual chains by indicating what previous and future texts a particular text responds to. As Solin (2001: 10) states, analysis of intertextuality is

particularly interesting in connection with environmental discourse, because “there is seldom consensus on the ‘facts’ underlying particular risk scenarios”, and therefore, as Carvalho (2005: 2) argues, “the media are a crucial site for the definition and re-definition of meanings associated with climate change”.

## 5 Analysis

From the perspective of intertextuality, it is interesting to observe that what all the texts have in common is that they do not give voice to alternative views concerning the adequacy of the ‘20 20 by 2020’ measures. Doing this, the texts give no room for radical green discourses, and four of the texts (Guardian, Irish Independent, Dagens Nyheter, and Aftonbladet) reflect Barroso’s (2008) effectively legitimizing claim that the package and becoming greener is a great economic opportunity. Examples 1–5 in table 2 below demonstrate how these four texts thus promote the discourse of ecological modernization.

**Table 2.** Examples of the discourse of ecological modernization.

	Quotation	Who quoted	Source
1	We must not forget the <u>huge economic opportunity</u> represented by Europe’s transition into a low-emissions economy [...] There are real opportunities there: the renewables sector alone will bring <u>one million jobs</u> by 2020 [...] we must seize this chance.		Barroso (2008)
2	Barroso said the package would <u>unleash a money-spinning bonanza</u> in Europe and urged EU firms to seize the opportunity [...] He predicted hundreds of thousands of <u>new jobs</u> .	Barroso	Guardian
3	our package [...] is an opportunity that should create <u>thousands of new businesses</u> and <u>millions of jobs</u> .	Barroso	The Irish Independent
4	To do nothing would be even more expensive according to the EU commission that hopes the proposal creates <u>new jobs</u> and <u>increases growth</u> .	EU commission	Dagens Nyheter
5	According commission president Barroso, there will be a whole <u>new job market</u> when significantly more renewable energy is produced [...] According to the commission, the system [ETS] will <u>bring in €50bn</u> per year 2020.	Barroso; EU commission	Aftonbladet

In the texts, voice is mainly given to the EU, especially Barroso, and national ministers. This is demonstrated by some of the direct and indirect quotations in table 3 below. As can be seen in the table, most quotations by EU representatives point out why the package is necessary or beneficial (ex. 1, 7–12), whereas quotations by national

ministers mainly, though not exclusively, focus on nationally important issues, either supporting (examples 15–16) or undermining (ex. 5–6) the EU package depending on the overall framing in the text – an aspect that will be discussed in another paper. Differing from all the other texts, the one from The Telegraph mainly gives space to industry representatives (ex. 3 and 4).

**Table 3.** Examples of who are given voice in the texts.

	<b>Quotation</b>	<b>Who quoted</b>	<b>Source</b>
1	Europe can be the first economy for the low-carbon age	Barroso	Guardian
2	This package will show the EU’s continuing global leadership on climate change. <u>I want to see it agreed as soon as possible</u> to give business the certainty it needs to plan low-carbon investments with confidence.	UK business secretary	Guardian
3	The head of Britain’s manufacturers’ group, EEF, <u>warned that the ETS proposals faced intense scrutiny from industry</u> . He said: ‘Our concern has always been that if a badly-designed ETS forced European companies to incur extra costs this would damage our competitiveness and increase emissions by forcing companies to relocate elsewhere.	Head of EEF	Telegraph
4	CBI director general [...] was also <u>cautious about the renewables target</u> . ‘The UK needs more renewables, but this target is daunting and potentially costly.’	CBI (business lobby org.) director	Telegraph
5	Taoiseach Bertie Ahern gave strong indications that the <u>assumptions used by the commission</u> to arrive at the targets <u>would be seriously challenged</u> by the Government at EU level.	Irish prime minister	Irish Times
6	Echoing the comments of Tánaiste Brian Cowen from earlier in the week, Mr Ahern also <u>raised concerns that the ultimate decision to impose targets on each member state arose out of a fair and transparent process</u> .	Irish prime minister (and minister for finance)	Irish Times
7	<u>The cost of doing nothing</u> to slash greenhouse gases <u>would be even more costly</u> , the Commission warned yesterday.	European commission	Irish Independent
8	While the measures would cost all European consumers, Commission President Barroso said: ‘ <u>The cost of inaction is up to 10 times more</u> than what we are proposing.	Barroso	Irish Independent
9	Electricity bill can increase by 10-15pc [...] But <u>to do nothing</u> would be even more expensive, according to the EU commission.	European commission	Dagens Nyheter
10	The Swedish EU-commissioner [...] thinks that <u>the proposal is perhaps the most important one</u> that the commission has put forward.	Swedish EU-commissioner	Dagens Nyheter
11	The <u>costs will be divided fairly</u> between member countries, said Barroso.	Barroso	Aftonbladet
12	It [the package] will cost, but according to Barroso there is <u>no other way out</u> .	Barroso	Aftonbladet
13	Even though the package aims to reduce total emissions, it also includes <u>exemptions to energy-</u>	Barroso	Helsingin Sanomat

*The EU Energy and Climate Package in the Media in January 2008. A Look at Intertextuality And Who Gets to Say How Things Stand*

	<u>intensive industries</u> [...] According to commission president Barroso, this is an attempt to <u>protect European heavy industry</u> .		
14	Commission: Electricity will become 10-15pc more expensive in 12 years	Commission	Helsingin Sanomat
15	Finnish minister for trade, Mauri Pekkarinen (center party) minister for environment Kimmo Tiilikainen (center party) described [the targets for Finland] as demanding but moderate. Pekkarinen convinced that the targets are fully possible to meet.	Finnish ministers for trade and energy	Aamulehti
16	The minister for trade emphasized saving energy. He reminded that <u>Finland has committed herself to reducing energy</u> consumption by 17,8 terawatt hours per year.	Finnish minister of trade	Aamulehti

In contrast, and what is of main interest in this paper, none of the texts give voice to critique against the package from environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In fact, the writer of The Guardian text even claims that environmental pressure groups “*sounded broadly satisfied with the package*”. This was even though several NGOs in reality directed strong criticism towards the measures proposed in the climate package. Some of this critique is demonstrated in table 4 below. As can be seen from examples 1–3, criticism was especially targeted at the emissions reductions target, while the renewables target (examples 3–4) was received more positively. In addition to The Guardian, where the head of the UN intergovernmental panel on climate change is quoted as saying that the deal is “*a work in progress. I see no reason why some of these targets may not become stronger, may not become more stringent*”, only Dagens Nyheter implies, in the opening sentence “*some call it industrial revolution, others think the goals are too wimpy*”, that not everyone thinks these measures will be enough to really fight climate change. No explanation, however, is given to who these “others” might be, or what they think the goals should be. Giving no voice to alternative views, the texts by and large present the climate package as a legitimate solution in fighting climate change. Environmental problems are treated as solvable, as is necessary to make them a subject to political regulation to begin with (see Weingart, Engels & Pansegrau 2000), but within the tight confines of the capitalist economy.

**Table 4:** Critique against the climate package from NGOs.

	<b>Quotation</b>	<b>Press release heading</b>	<b>Source</b>
1	WWF believes that the <u>target could have been more ambitious and should have aimed at a 30 per cent reduction.</u>	<i>EU must improve performance on climate change</i>	WWF
2	To discuss how emissions reductions of a <u>pitiful 20 percent</u> will be divided between member countries is a waste of time and energy. In Bali, the starting point was that the EU and the rest of the industrialized world must reduce emissions between 25 and 40 percent by 2020 to be able to keep global temperature rise below the critical two degrees. That the EU now comes with out with <u>20 percent is very weak.</u>	<i>Greenpeace comments on commission's energy package: EU's goal for emissions reductions totally inadequate</i>	Greenpeace Sweden
3	The obligation proposed to Finland concerning the increase in the use of renewable energy sources is most welcome, but the proposals on member countries' <u>emissions reductions targets</u> and the emissions permits to be handed out to companies <u>have been watered out</u> , under pressure from industry, <u>so that they are inadequate.</u>	<i>Share of renewable energy sources to triple vis-à-vis nuclear energy</i>	Greenpeace Finland
4	Britain today committed to launching a <u>clean energy revolution which will create thousands of jobs, help reduce carbon emissions and if delivered confirm the country's position as a world leader on climate change.</u>	<i>Britain commits to a clean energy revolution</i>	Greenpeace UK

## 6 Conclusions

In this paper, we have attempted to demonstrate why the analysis of intertextuality is important in cross-cultural analyses on how transnational environmental initiatives are reported on in the media. Our main claim is that the analysis of intertextuality is crucial because, as the examples provided in this paper demonstrate, those who are given voice in the media are the ones whose versions of reality are promoted. To make visible what is left out of media texts, it is therefore also important to consider whose voices are not included in particular instances. These kind of cross-cultural analyses seem especially critical in Europe, where the EU needs to be able to implement transnational policies in 27 countries. As the media are an important site for construction of social reality, increasing our understanding of how environmental policy initiatives are reported on in different countries can, in addition to increasing readers' criticality, help policy-makers plan their communication in a way that promotes the necessity of action against climate change.

What this exploratory analysis suggests is that in connection to the EU climate change package, at least the EU and the analyzed texts largely promote the environmental discourses of sustainability and ecological modernization that treat environmental problems and solutions within the confines of the capitalist economy; as Barroso (2008) stated in his speech, “*this [the climate package] is sustainable development in action*”. Thus, even though it has been argued that we need more radical solutions in order to really solve the environmental crises that we are facing (see e.g. Dryzek 1997; Prasad & Elmes 2005), it seems that at least the climate package fails to question and shake the current structure of the economy. This is no doubt in large part because, as Burchell and Lightfoot (2004: 333–334) so aptly state based on Baker (2000), “the EU has a strategic interest in ensuring that the international model of sustainable development adopted is one that does not damage the Union’s economic competitiveness”. Therefore, as they continue, “for example, an international model based upon ‘green radicalism’[...] would have a serious economic impact upon the EU.” (ibid. 334). With this economic risk, the EU has an interest in promoting the kind of international agreements that mirror its own, non-radical operationalizations of how environmental problems should be solved. What remains to be seen is whether more radical discourses gain space as the leaders of the world gather together in the next UN climate meeting in Copenhagen in December 2009 to hopefully strike a global climate deal to replace the Kyoto Protocol that is about to expire. Until then, there remains a lot to study in media representations of the EU energy and climate package.

## References

- Alexander, Richard J. (2008). *Framing discourse on the environment: a critical discourse approach*. New York: Routledge.
- Althaus, Scott L. & David Tewksbury (2002). Agenda setting and the “new” news: patters of issue importance among readers of the paper and online versions of the New York Times. *Communication Research*, 29, 180–207.
- Antilla, Liisa (2005). Climate of skepticism: US newspaper coverage of the science of climate change. *Global Environmental Change* 15, 338–352.
- Baker, Susan (2000). The EU: integration, competition and growth – and sustainability. In: *Implementing Sustainable Development*, 303–336. Eds William M. Lafferty & James Meadowcraft. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
- Barroso, José Manuel (2008). 20 20 by 20 20: Europe’s climate change opportunity. Speech to the European Parliament on January 23.
- Boykoff, Maxwell T. & Jules M. Boykoff (2004). Balance as bias: global warming and the US prestige press. *Global Environmental Change* 14, 125–136.

- Boykoff, Maxwell T. & Jules M. Boykoff (2007). Climate change and journalistic norms: A case-study of US mass-media coverage. *Geoforum* 38, 1190–1204.
- Boykoff, Maxwell T. (2008). The cultural politics of climate change discourse in UK tabloids. *Political Geography* 27, 549–569.
- Burchell, Jon & Simon Lightfoot (2004). Leading the way? The European Union at the WSSD. *European Environment* 34, 331–341.
- Carvalho, Anabela (2005). Representing the politics of the greenhouse effect: Discursive strategies in the British media. *Critical Discourse Studies* 2(1), 1–29.
- Carvalho, Anabela & Jacquelin Burgess (2005). Cultural circuits of climate change in U.K. broadsheet newspapers, 1985–2003. *Risk Analysis* 25(6), 1457–1469.
- Carvalho, Anabela (2007). Ideological cultures and media discourses on scientific knowledge: re-reading news on climate change. *Public Understanding of Science* 16(2), 223–243.
- Doulton, Hugh & Katrina Brown (2009). Ten years to prevent catastrophe? Discourses of climate change and international development in the UK press. *Global Environmental Change* 19, 191–202.
- Dryzek, John .S. (1997). *The politics of the earth. Environmental discourses*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ereaut, Gill & Nat Segnit (2006). *Warm words: how we are telling the climate story and can we tell it better?* IPPR Publication.
- Fairclough, Norman (1995). *Media discourse*. London, UK: Edward Arnold.
- Fairclough, Norman (2003). *Analyzing discourse: textual analysis for social research*. London: Longman.
- Flynn, Brendan (2004). Ireland. The triumph of policy style over substance. In: *Environmental policy in Europe. The Europeanization of national environmental policy*, 109–125. Eds Andrew Jordan & Duncan Liefferink. Oxfordshire: Routledge.
- Graber, Doris A. (1988). *Processing The News: How People Tame The Information Tide* (2nd ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Greenpeace Finland (2008). Uusiutuvienergialähteiden osuus kolminkertaiseksi ydinvoimaan nähden [Share of renewable energy sources to triple vis-à-vis nuclear energy]. Press release on January 23.
- Greenpeace Sweden (2008). Greenpeace kommentar till kommissionens energipaket: EU:s mål för utsläppsminskningar är totalt otillräckligt [Greenpeace comment on commission's energy package: EU's goal for emissions reductions totally inadequate]. Press release on January 23.
- Greenpeace UK (2008). Britain commits to a clean energy revolution. Press release on January 23.
- Hajer, Maarten A. (1995). *The politics of environmental discourse: ecological modernization and the policy process*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Jordan, Andrew (2004). The United Kingdom. From policy 'taking' to policy 'shaping'. In: *Environmental policy in Europe. The Europeanization of national environmental policy*, 109–125. Eds. Andrew Jordan & Duncan Liefferink. Oxfordshire: Routledge.
- Kronsell, Annica (2004). Sweden. Reluctant but environmentally ambitious. In: *Environmental policy in Europe. The Europeanization of national environmental policy*, 109–125. Eds Andrew Jordan & Duncan Liefferink. Oxfordshire: Routledge.
- Macdonald, Myra (2003). *Exploring Media Discourse*. London: Arnold.
- Prasad, Pushkala & Michael Elmes (2005). In the name of the practical: Unearthing the hegemony of pragmatics in the discourse of environmental management. *Journal of Management Studies* 42(4), 845–867.
- Sairinen, Rauno & Arto Lindblom (2004). Finland. A realist pragmatist. In: *Environmental policy in Europe. The Europeanization of national environmental policy*, 109–125. Eds Andrew Jordan & Duncan Liefferink. Oxfordshire: Routledge.
- Solin, Anna (2001). *Tracing Texts: Intertextuality in Environmental Discourse*. Pragmatics, Ideology and Contacts Monographs 2 series. Helsinki: Department of English, University of Helsinki.
- van Dijk, Teun A. (1998). *Ideology: A multidisciplinary approach*. London: Sage.
- Weingart, Peter, Anita Engels & Petra Pansegrau (2000). Risks of communication: discourses on climate change in science, politics, and the mass media. *Public Understanding of Science* 9(3), 261–283.
- WWF UK (2008). EU must improve performance on climate change. Press release on January 23.