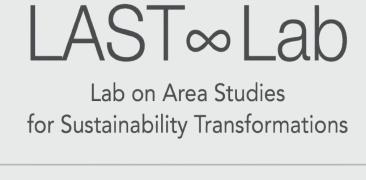# ECOLINGUISTICS for SUSTAINABILITY TRANSFORMATIONS
- Novel Research Trajectories at LAST Lab, Ca' Foscari University of Venice -

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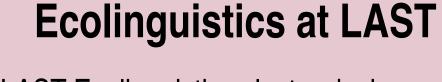(3) Department of Foreign Languages, Literatures and Cultures, Roma Tre University, Italy

LAST∞Lab — Lab on Area Studies for Sustainability Transformations

LAST Lab ALLIES

RE·IMAGINARY — CULTIVATING CULTURES OF SUSTAINABILITY

Ca' Foscari University of Venice — THE NEW INSTITUTE — Centre for Environmental Humanities (NICHE) at Ca' Foscari University of Venice

GreenDecision

LIPU

environmental justice atlas

Enabling Social & Inter-Generational Learning Processes

EDUCATION

ENGAGEMENT

Ecolinguistics at LAST
LAST Ecolinguistics cluster designs and tests tools to study the role of language in (re)shaping environmental perception and decision-making. We employ quantitative and qualitative methods informed by ecological discourse analysis. The Lab supports research-driven teaching and co-creative engagement practices. So far, LAST has focused on Chinese, English, and Italian language.

Ecolinguistics for Environmental Humanities
LAST research informs teachings at the Environmental Humanities MA Programme at Ca' Foscari. Qualitative analysis and re-storying practices tested at the Lab have been used in activities funded by the Erasmus+ ICM at Beijing Normal University (BNU).

We are planning a series of two workshops to be hosted in Venice in 2025, supported by the EUTOPIA Connected Community on Environmental Humanities.

Testing ecolinguistc tools for EIA analysis & restorying at BNU, Summer 2023

Envisioning Sustainable Futures
Ecolinguistics has extraordinary potential in enabling young students, activists, and local communities to envision sustainable futures. At LAST we design and facilitate gatherings of activists, local communities, and academics, to assist them in uncovering instrumental uses of language and defining counter-narratives.

LAST members and local activists during an ecolinguistic-based visioning workshop on the Island of Mazzorbetto - Venice. LAST engagement activities are mostly place-based, rooted in the many challenges faced by the beautiful - and fragile - social-ecological system of the Venetian Lagoon.
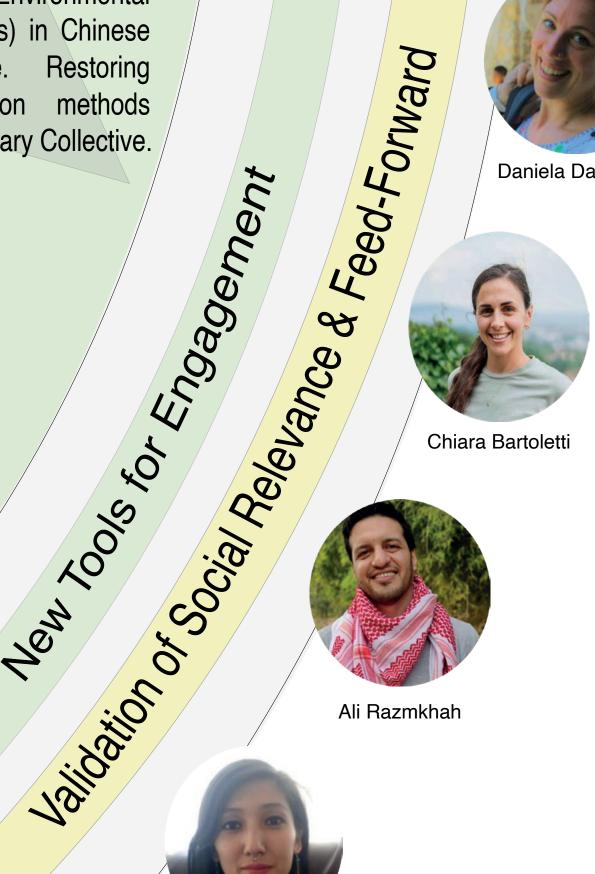
MISSION
LAST seeks to unearth the potential of language-based area studies to comprehend and nurture sustainability transformations. Our work spans across research, university education, and social engagement. LAST is built upon three, intertwined thematic clusters (theory, ecolinguistics, and political ecology) and one transversal component (co-creative practices).

POLITICAL ECOLOGY

ECOLINGUISTICS

RE-THEORIZING AREA STUDIES

CO-CREATIVE METHODS

ROOTS
LAST Lab is a trans-disciplinary research group based at the Department of Asian and North African Studies at Ca' Foscari University Venice. Our work is motivated by a shared concern about the devastation of biological and cultural diversity in the current era. We are committed to systemic changes to bring about authentic sustainability transformations.

QUANTITATIVE APPROACHES
Ongoing activities

Corpus-Assisted (critical) Discourse Analysis (CADS)
We employ CADS approaches to analyze linguistic patterns in Chinese Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) reports. By means of corpus techniques like keywords and collocation analysis, we explore commonalities and divergences across ESG reports produced by companies with different ownership status and commitment to SDGs.

Corpus-based cognitive linguistics
LAST includes a PhD project on the functioning of passive constructions in Chinese environmental discourse, investigating whether the cognitive frames they evoke differ from those triggered in general contexts. To this end, a specialized bimodal Corpus on Chinese Environmental Discourse (CCED) has been developed and is now being analyzed.

Corpus-based systemic linguistic analysis
LAST includes a PhD project focused on how syntax and semantics shape language, promoting peculiar frames and narratives. The Linguistic Iceberg Model (LIM), a systemic model, is used to examine Chinese Prefecture-level City Work Reports. The research employs AI tools, to uncover trends in governmental environmental discourse.

C-LEDA: Chinese Language Ecological Discourse Analysis
C-LEDA is an ecological discourse analysis framework consisting of 11 lexical indicators. It has been developed to assist the analysis of how lexical choices shape social-ecological narratives. Applied so far to an environmental justice case in China, it shows potential for broader applications in other languages and contexts, as well as for quantitative inquires.

QUALITATIVE APPROACHES
Ongoing activities

Co-creative Restorying Practices
We design ecolinguistics methods for restorying practices, to address instrumental omissions in documents informing decision-making. We have focused primarily on Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) in Chinese and English language. Restoring practices are based on methods designed by the Re-Imaginary Collective.
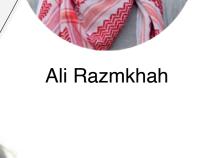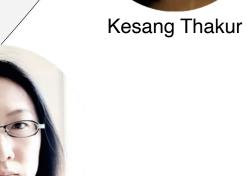
Restorying EIAs during the Cansiglio Forest Retreat, Autumn 2022.

RESEARCH

Validation of Scientific Relevance & Feed-Forward
New Tools for Teaching
New Tools for Engagement
Validation of Social Relevance & Feed-Forward

ECOLINGUISTIC CLUSTER

POLITICAL ECOLOGY CLUSTER

Sergio Conti
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Daniele Brombal — LAST Lab Coordinator
Marc Foggin
Giulia Dal Maso
Meng Meng Cui
Kesang Thakur
Ali Razmkhah
Chiara Bartoletti
Daniela Dal Bene

Ecolinguistic publications by LAST Lab

- Brombal, D., Conti, S. & Szeto, P. Y. (2024). Lexical indicators for Chinese language ecological discourse analysis: Design and testing of a novel framework. *Language Science*, 104. Doi: 10.1016/j.langsci.2024.101634
- Brombal, D., Szeto, P.-Y., & Conti, S. (2023). Unveiling the Language of Ideology in China's Environmental Planning: Pilot Ecolinguistic Analysis of an Environmental Impact Assessment. *Annali di Ca' Foscari Serie Orientale*, 59. Doi: 10.30687/AnnOr/2385-3042/2023/01/018
- Cui, M.M., Brombal, D. (2023). From resistance to transformation – The journey to develop a framework to explore the transformative potential of environmental resistance practices. *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 49, 5, 599-620. Doi: 10.1177/01914537231164186
- Conti, S., Locatelli, L., Brombal, D. & Szeto, P. Y. (In progress). The language of ESG sustainability reports of Chinese listed companies: A preliminary corpus-assisted analysis from an ecolinguistic perspective.
- Cui, M. M., Brombal, D. (In progress). A Test Application of the Resistance-Based Transformative Alternative (ReBasTA) Framework on Environmental Justice Cases in Asia and Africa.
- Burgio, M.S., Brombal, D,, Gonella, F. (In progress). The Linguistic Iceberg Model (LIM): a systemic approach to ecolinguistic analysis.