UDC 81

CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY EXPOSURE IN DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT AS A MODERN BASIS OF EFFECTIVE B2B AND B2C COMMUNICATION

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The modern reality defines the remote communication format as preferable. Operation and interaction in the modern digital environment have their own specific character and conscious nature. A special role is attributed to reputation and sharing values, which initially act as an attractor, and subsequently – the basis of strong and long-term relationships. The article, based on the analysis of materials from companies' websites (2021 sustainability reports in particular), reveals the strategies for verbal expression of corporate sustainability, which determines the potential for companies' interaction in the B2B and B2C formats.
Keywords: *psycholinguistics, sustainability, corporate sustainability, verbal expression, digital communication, B2B communication, B2C communication.*

1. Introduction

Constant escalation of environmental problems has made the humanity reconsider the approach to all the processes in all the life spheres. International organizations, institutions and individuals in a joint effort are striving to improve or at least stabilize the situation on a global level. Various initiatives are taking place worldwide. E.g., the UN has suggested the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development [http] and announced the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [http] which have already been approved by professionals and society in a general sense and have a huge potential to shape the future of many spheres of human activity. The SDGs cover the most burning world issues. The closest future will be aimed at clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, climate action, sustainable cities and communities to name a few. This is the new thinking framework or the modern ideology which everyone should be ready for.

Nowadays the market is dominated by evolving companies able to be flexible and follow modern trends. The recent worldwide trends can be described by the words 'green', 'sustainable', 'environmentally friendly' and 'pro-ecological'. Consequently, any choice at any level (personal, professional, corporate, etc.) is likely to be in favor of something possessing the qualities and characteristics mentioned above.

Business success is always built on a promising company's image and its

solid reputation. Meanwhile one of the main means of earning a reputation is effective B2B and B2C communication. Communication/interaction being direct or indirect, verbal or non-verbal has a huge impact on company/brand positioning. In the era of globalization and digitalization the information a company communicates/broadcasts provokes feedback locally, nationwide or even globally.

Social distancing that originated due to COVID-19 has formed a habit of distance approach to communication and currently this once necessity has a tendency to become a common preference. Under the circumstances the major means of brand positioning are the company website and social networks. These information media have all the capabilities for creating an appealing image and producing a favorable first impression.

Any relationship or partnership and even choice in the modern world is based on shared values. In the business field all the parties also have a conscious approach. Nowadays individuals, companies and institutions being environmentally concerned have eco-friendly and sustainable preferences for the reasons of ideology, fashion or reputation. Forward-looking businesses start considering this as a competitive advantage and make every effort to communicate the shared values. Being a real part of their policy and development strategy or just a manipulative deception, it gives a common ground, causes satisfaction and subsequently triggers partner or customer loyalty.

Many aspects of corporate sustainability have already been addressed in various studies. This phenomenon has been and is still being considered nationally and across cultures (e.g. [Gerner 2019]), by developed and developing countries (e.g. [Ataniyazova et al. 2022]). Close attention has been paid to the sustainable business models of enterprises (e.g. [Comin et al. 2020]), their fulfillment of obligations and the coherence of declarations and real actions (e.g. [Smith & Rhiney 2020; Zioło et al. 2020]), green competitive advantage based on green corporate image (e.g. [Alam & Islam 2021]), sustainable HR management (e.g. [Karlshaus 2020]), sustainability performance reporting trends (e.g. [Coulmont et al. 2022]), etc. Nonetheless the linguistic and psycholinguistic dimensions of corporate sustainability remain open for consideration. There are some investigations in this field (e.g. [Kang & Kim 2022; Laskin & Nesova 2022]), still multiple issues are gaining traction among the scholars especially those involved into interdisciplinary research.

2. Materials and Methods

We believe that nowadays corporate sustainability exposure in digital environment is the basis of effective B2B and B2C communication underlying business success.

According to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (goal 12, clause 12.6), countries should "encourage companies, especially large and

transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle" [https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda]. Therefore, large and transnational companies, working in accordance with the SDGs and implementing sustainable practices, serve as reliable information sources as well as appropriate targets for analysis. It is worth considering not just the market leaders' policies, practices and experience to identify the key points and create a promising innovative development strategy applicable for challengers. Likewise, it is vital to consider their business communication strategy, the principles of broadcasting information that strengthen their positioning as sustainable and consequently facilitate winning the competition. Hence, the purpose of the study was to reveal the principles of verbal expression of sustainability necessary for creating an appealing trustworthy corporate image and enhancing the company's attractive potential.

It was decided to address mass media and multiple rankings to come up with a shortlist of the most sustainable companies of 2021 which are expected to preserve their status in 2022. The research showed that a lot of businesses are striving to comply with the 2030 Agenda, Schneider Electric SE, Ørsted A/S and Vestas Wind Systems A/S being the leaders among them. These companies have different countries of origin still share common values. Their websites as well as their open access 2021 sustainability reports provided there were selected as sources of research material.

A huge information pool has been generated and studied. However, the emphasis was placed on the three most impactful organizations. The companies' websites [http] and the 2021 reports [http] were assessed in search of sustainability evidence. Within the framework of the study, the text corpus and the visuals were analyzed using frame analysis, statistic analysis and data interpretation method.

Frame analysis is based on the theory of frames developed by M. Minsky [Minsky 1979]. All subjective knowledge and experience are stored in our consciousness arranged in hierarchical frame structures which present the net of information search. Any subsequent interaction with the outside world, verbal or non-verbal, activates the net of frames and knowledge slots. The input and output of information provoke images that trigger the activation of the individual knowledge system and determine its work.

In this study the data analysis allows us to identify the lexical units by means of which the companies demonstrate their sustainability involvement and produce the proper public image. These words provide us with the access to the part of individual mental lexicon storing knowledge on corporate sustainability. Each of the lexical units being a part of the semantic field is capable of creating and recalling the multidimensional image of corporate sustainability which is the mediator between the consciousness and the real world. The more sustainability terms and issue-related concepts are associated with the company the stronger its

competitive potential is, as the image of corporate sustainability is deeper rooted in the company image. Therefore, the companies planning to improve their positions on the modern market can consider the research findings and choose a suitable business communication strategy based on the highlighted concepts.

3. Results

The conducted analysis allowed to identify several general frames, the relevance of which is proved by these concepts' inclusion into the main activity fields of the United Nations Global Compact [http], the organization aiming to mobilize a global movement of sustainable companies and stakeholders to create a greener world. Many other pro-ecological organizations and associations also emphasize and prioritize these targets. The following frames were listed: sustainable environment, social sustainability, sustainable governance, SDG integration, sustainable finance and sustainable supply chain. This paper will reveal the frame "sustainable environment" in connection with Ørsted A/S.

Ørsted is a Denmark-based energy company that aims at total world transition to green energy. The company claims in its Sustainability Report 2021: "we work every day to decarbonise our energy generation and operations (scope 1-2) and to achieve net-zero emissions in our full value chain (scope 1-3) by 2040" [Ørsted 2021 Sustainability Report http]. The document contains information on the main principles of their sustainability work, lists their sustainability priorities, reveals the progress across sustainability programmes and presents their sustainability governance model. It also displays their sustainability ratings and memberships, the data which confirm the company's sustainability status.

The data analysis showed that the frame "sustainable environment" has a number of slots of dynamic nature. The slots grouped by category are as follows (the figures denote the frequency of occurrence in the Sustainability Report):

sustainability (168): sustainability challenge (23); sustainability programme (14); sustainability priorities (14); sustainability themes (11); sustainability criteria (3); sustainability impacts (3); sustainability specialist (2); sustainability benefits (2); sustainability commitment (2); sustainability committee (2); sustainability governance (2); sustainability specialist (2); sustainability work (2); sustainability agenda (1); sustainability guidelines (1); sustainability landscape (1); sustainability leadership (1); sustainability practices (1); sustainability ratings and memberships (1); sustainability targets (1);

sustainable (42): sustainable biomass (14); sustainable wooden biomass (3); sustainable finance (5); sustainable financing (3); sustainable approach (2); sustainable business (2); sustainable energy company (2); sustainable alternatives (1); sustainable biomass-fired (1); sustainable CO_2 (1); Sustainable Development Goals (1); sustainable forests (1); sustainable use of resources (1);

green (170): *green energy (78):* green energy assets (6); green energy

projects (5); green energy in balance with nature (5); green energy build-out (4); green energy business (3); green energy transition (3); green energy deployment (2); green energy for the planet and its people (1); green energy that works for people (1); green energy to decarbonise industry (1); green energy to limit global warming (1); green energy transformation (1); *green electricity (14); green transformation (13); green fuels (10); green steel (4); green investment (2); green economy (1); Green Hydrogen (1); green jobs (1); green leaders (1); green power (1); green solutions (1); green share of energy generation (1); green technologies (1);*

net-zero (45): net-zero emissions (12); net-zero steel (6); net-zero target (6); net-zero by 2040 (2); Net-Zero Standard (2); net-zero world (2); net-zero ambitions (1); net-zero across all scopes (1); net-zero economy (1); net-zero supply chains (1); Net-Zero Steel Initiative (1); net-zero value chain (1);

renewable (80): *renewable energy (47):* renewable energy project (8); renewable energy structures (3); renewable energy assets (2); renewable energy business (2); renewable energy company (2); renewable energy industry (2); Renewable Energy Agency (1); renewable energy build-out (1); renewable energy capacity (1); renewable energy components (1); renewable energy installations (1); renewable energy supply chains (1); renewable energy technologies (1);

targets (64): targets and indicators (21); reduction targets (8); emissions reduction targets (4); carbon reduction targets (1); science-based target(s) (6); the Science Based Targets initiative (2); programme targets (5); net-zero targets (3); ambitious targets (1); global target for net-zero emissions (1); offshore wind target (1); 2025 carbon-neutral target (1); target of reducing our emissions intensity (1); target of only using certified sustainable wooden biomass at our CHP plants (1);

biodiversity (73); **nature** (41); **ecosystem** (16); **people** (55); **local community(-ies)** (34); **human rights** (29); **planet** (13); **planet and its people** (7); **climate** (50); **climate action** (17); **decarbonisation** (27): decarbonise (15); decarbonising (6); **greenhouse gas** (10); **greenhouse gas emissions** (5); **global warming** (9); **responsibility** (13); **impact assessment** (6); **culture** (14); **building a culture** (3); **wind farm** (40); **offshore wind farm** (19); **natural resources** (5); **ecological enhancement** (2).

The above-mentioned slots reflect the essence of corporate sustainability of Ørsted in sufficient detail. Nevertheless, to ensure the ultimate understanding of the frame under consideration it was necessary to assess the words of special concern, i.e. 'environment' (29 matches), 'environmental' (19 matches) and 'environmentally' (0 matches). The acquired data being the means of corporate sustainability exposure were divided into several groups:

types of environments the company is concerned about: environment (29); local natural environments (1); local environment (1); natural environment (1);

offshore environments (1); marine environment (1); dynamic ocean environment (1); work environment (1);

specialists involved: experienced in-house environmental specialists (1); renewable industry's most experienced environmental specialists (1); Lead Environment & Consents Specialist (1); marine environment experts (1);

types of addressed sustainability issues: environmental risks (4); environmental impacts (2); environmental impact (1); negative social and environmental impacts (1); social and environmental risks (1); environmental and social challenges (1); environmental and social benefits (1); environmental obstacles (1); biodiversity impacts on the dynamic ocean environment (1); additional environmental pressure on the ocean (1); biodiversity impacts on offshore environments (1); global environmental footprint (1); societal and environmental risks in our metal supply chains (1); societal and environmental risks in their supply chains (1); the risk of impacting local natural environments during mining (1); people most disproportionately affected by environmental risks benefit from the green energy (1); adverse impacts on workers, communities, and the natural environment (1); do no significant harm to the other environmental objectives (1);

types of activities and priorities: environmental objectives (1); environmental policy (1); understanding the local environment (1); solving environmental and social challenges (1); to conduct detailed environmental assessments (1); to perform environmental impact assessments to identify locations with no environmental obstacles (1); delivering environmental and social benefits from our renewable energy projects (1); lowering our global environmental footprint (1); performed a full-scale life cycle assessment of our Changhua projects in Taiwan to get an updated overview of the environmental footprint across all components of an Ørsted offshore wind farm (1); to meaningfully measure biodiversity impacts on the dynamic ocean environment (1); measuring biodiversity impacts on offshore environments (1); learn how other IRMA members are addressing societal and environmental risks (1); to address specific societal and environmental risks in our metal supply chains (1); to mitigate adverse impacts on workers, communities, and the natural environment, and to meet legislative requirements (1); creating a work environment (1); oversee our quality, health, safety, and environment (QHSE) strategic priorities (1).

4. Conclusion

The conducted research presents a linguistic proof of the sustainable status of the companies under consideration. The studied companies' websites and the 2021 reports have the visuals and the content effective enough to create a sustainable framework for B2B and B2C communication and an appealing foundation for any type of business relationship.

The performed analysis shows that Ørsted is a company with a sustainable vision and corresponding activities which are elaborately presented digitally in an open access. The introduced frame "sustainable environment" and the slots it contains present an example of a verbalized mantal structure and the areas of concern and attention any company striving to position itself as sustainable should focus on.

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