zhaw
School of Applied Linguistics

Energy Discourses in Switzerland
Tracking prerequisites for political and social change

Mixed methods
Interplay of quantitative analysis and qualitative reconstruction

Multilingualism
German, French, Italian, English

Timeframe
2016–2019

Financial support
Swiss Office of Energy (SFOE); Energy-Economy-Society (EES) research program

Public discourse about energy policies plays a key role in the successful implementation of the Swiss energy strategy. The interdisciplinary research project **Energy Discourses in Switzerland** focuses on the patterns of language use related to energy policy. Patterns of language use are understood and analyzed as drivers or constraints of democratic dialogue and collective innovation in the field.

Issues surrounding the production, supply, and use of energy will be of concern to Switzerland as well as to other countries in the next few years and in the decades to come. In the project **Energy Discourses in Switzerland,** researchers at the ZHAW School of Applied Linguistics are investigating the communicative prerequisites for the anticipated changes. The research is based on a large multilingual corpus of texts relevant to Swiss discourses on energy from 2011 onwards.

Objectives

The objective of the project is to identify how patterns of language use about energy issues in the national languages (German, French, Italian, Romansch) and English develop across institutions, media, societal as well as economic sectors in Switzerland. The findings will be actively conveyed to various actors involved in the transition to sustainable energy systems and in the democratic dialogue about energy.

Methods and corpus

- **analysis of and comparison between discourses in the Swiss national languages**
- **large and growing corpus of texts by key actors in the Swiss energy discourses**
- **computer-based corpus linguistics (data-driven turn)**
- **mixed methods approach (guided by and combined with qualitative methods such as theoretical sampling and text analysis)**
- **use of richly-annotated text data**
- **visualizations of complex analyses**

Principal investigators

Maureen Ehrensberger-Dow
Maren Runte
Peter Stücheli-Herlach

Project partner

The project is supported by the Swiss Federal Office of Energy (SFOE) under the Energy – Economy – Society (EES) research programme.
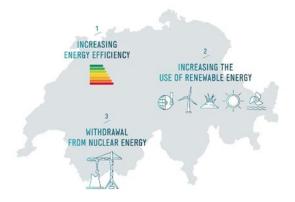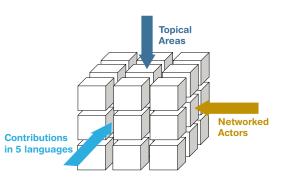
Research

Zurich Universities
of Applied Sciences and Arts

Topics, coalitions, and typical texts in Swiss energy discourses

Discourse analysis helps to identify the formation and transformation of common understandings of energy topics. It reveals discursive coalitions and typical texts in public controversies and provides diverse actors in complex networks with support in focusing their communication activities.

Visualization of main objectives of the Swiss energy strategy 2050.

Principles of the composition of the ZHAW Swiss-AL-corpus (Swiss Applied Linguistics Corpus) of energy discourses.

Key words in a sub-corpus of Swiss energy discourses as of March 2017.

For more information about the project, please visit:

www.zhaw.ch/energy-discourses

Contact
Peter Stücheli-Herlach
ZHAW Zurich University of Applied Sciences
School of Applied Linguistics
Theaterstrasse 15c, PO Box, 8401 Winterthur, Switzerland
peter.stuecheli@zhaw.ch