



Exploration of Ecological elements: An Eco linguistic Investigation of climate change Reports in Pakistan

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Abstract

This study employs an Eco linguistic perspective to examine the concept of climate change in climate reports. Drawing on Stibbe's model of evaluating language and ecology, the research investigates the framing, assessment, and erasure procedures and their function in uncovering the prevalent ecological ideologies embedded in the portrayal of the ecological crisis in selected news reports. This qualitative study seeks to uncover ecological ideologies embedded in the portrayal of ecological crisis. It also endeavors to determine whether the news under consideration was beneficial, ambivalent, or destructive to the environment. Findings of the study revealed that erasure of the agent (non-human species) is a prevalent feature in the selected reports. Non-appraisal elements are utilized in evaluation to counteract the destructive approach. Furthermore, it is generally seen that messages that are framed negatively tend to have a greater influence on attitudes and behaviors than messages that are framed positively. The framing and appraisal items of reports, however, make up the discourse ambivalent, while the erasure is illustrated as destructive discourses. The findings provide valuable insights for policy makers, media and public in understanding the portrayal of climate change and its impact on environmental attitudes and behaviors.

Keywords: Framing, Evaluation, Erasure, Ecology, Climate Change, Ecological ideologies, Eco Linguistics

1. Introduction

Conflicting interests relating to earth's resources and the protection of the environment are what lead to environmental concerns (D. Wastl-Walter, 2001). If environmental pressure grows, it will have an impact on other social issues as well. This suggests that even global climate change will impact societal transformation. As a result, people's perspectives on their lives and how they must live are influenced by environmental difficulties and construction. The *Stories we live by's* author, Stibbe (2015) is a notable scholar in the developing area of Eco linguistics, which can be summed up as the field that "explores the role of language in the life-sustaining interaction of humans, other species and the physical environment". Stibbe hopes that ecolinguistics can go beyond grammar and vocabulary (which are important) and encourage humanity to comprehend that our everyday lives are extremely much influenced by stories that we, usually as societies, live by, and that grasping these stories is an essential prerequisite for modifying them so that human behaviour can be more environmentally friendly. In other words, Eco linguistics deals with the role of language in the formation, maintenance, influence, or destruction of relationships between people, other life forms, and the environment. What each of us thinks to be environmentally friendly is determined by what Stibbe refers to as our "ecosophy", "a normative set of principles and assumptions about relationships among humans, other forms of life and the physical environment (Stibbe, 2015; Ali et al., 2022).

Professor Stibbe (2015) began his first lecture by explaining how industrialization and perpetual growth are not sustainable, because we can't keep producing enough food for cattle, or enough automobiles, or enough consumption or trash. Only two options remain for humanity: either make the transition to a sustainable society or let civilisation collapse and start over (Bendell, 2018). Either way, fundamental adjustments must be made to our way of life, our economic system, and the stories we tell about our planet (Klein, 2014; Audi et al., 2020). That's when words come in handy. "Stories are hidden reservoirs of morals," writes Okri (1996). If we alter the myths we were brought up with, we may alter the very nature of people and nations. Thus, the initial question is resolved: the goal of Eco linguistics is to examine the ways in which language is used to shape our cultures, especially industrial and consumerist ones, in order to uncover the hidden stories of ecological destruction and also to identify alternative narratives that promote beneficial ecology (Audi and Ali, 2023).

Since its inception, eco linguistics has been applied to a wide range of analyses, including discourse analysis (Sherlock and Rebecca, 2019; Fill and Muhlhausler, 2001; Steffensen, 2001; Goatly, 2002), grammatical analysis (Simon C., 1997), language evolution (Jonas Nölle, 2020), and linguistic diversity (Alinasab et al., 2021). However, actual implementations of language ecology were unusual. This study began with a discussion of the ecological crisis in linguistic communication or sorting out by reporters and environmentalists, and the connection between language, culture, and ecology in order to discover methods for resolving the dilemma. To determine if a story is beneficial, destructive, or ambivalent, Eco linguists can use their ecosophy as an ethical testing tool. Any story can be evaluated from an ecological point of view, asking whether it promotes the destruction or preservation of ecosystems. Stibbe (2015) defines eight stories that function as linguistic features in order to analyze this form of

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discourse: metaphor, framing, evaluation, identification, conviction, facticity, salient, and erasure. These features will aid the researcher in determining if the discourse is beneficial, destructive, or ambivalent.

This research examines the use of erasure/omission to hide the identities of those responsible for environmental harm, as well as the relationship between ecological framing and evaluation. The results of this research may shed light on why it's so important to include discussion of Eco linguistic concerns in Pakistan Climate reports. The research study provided insight on the consistency with which Eco linguistics is covered in the media.

Objective of the study is to investigate and analyze the presence of ecological elements in selected climate reports in Pakistan aiming to deepen the understanding of how the ecological dimension is represented and addressed in these selected reports.

1.1. Research Questions

- How ecological elements are addressed and conceptualized in climate change reports of Pakistan?
- What insights can be gained from analyzing the presence, framing and assessment of these elements in shaping our understanding of ecological crisis?
- What type of discourse is used in these selected reports?

2. Literature Review

In this section, an in-depth analysis of the key concepts, ideas, and theoretical assertions at play is discussed. It was Einar Haugen (1972), in his now-famous "The Ecology of Language," who first popularised the idea of studying how language interacts with its surroundings. The scope of Haugen's original development of "language ecology" was expanded by Halliday's observation on the interactions between language and ecological issues. Because of Halliday's leadership in the functional approach to language research, ecolinguistics has gained widespread acceptance.

The ecological climate change news discourse is studied primarily through the lenses of appraisal theory, framework & metaphor theory and approach theory. Wang (2018) compared the climate change news stories from China and the United States using the lens of eco-critical discourse analysis, including issues, speech, and news headlines, and addressed the disparities in the opinions and ideas & beliefs in the new climate change reports among the two countries, with the goal of enhancing people's capacity to compare and analyse discourse and become aware of language ecology protection. It was examined whether multimodal use (language and use of images in posters) in these campaigns displays beneficial stories or ideologies to safeguard other species and avoid their exploitation, which was deemed advantageous (Zhdhanava, Kaur, and Rajandran, 2021). In 2020, Moghadam and Samar looked into the usage of metaphor in academic writings written in second languages; Using Stibbe's Story Theory, Gong (2019) examined China Three Gorges Corporation's annual environmental report (2015); Yu (2020) examined ecological reporting in Chinese, English, or Italian commercial social responsibility reports.

The origins of framing in the social sciences is extensive. We could identify strands of belief beginning with Goffman's (1974) notion of the frames that clarify social circumstances; or Tversky and Kahneman's (1981) work on the structure of positive or negative 'message frames' and their impact on making decisions; however, I feel like that the research of Bransford and Johnson (1972), whose studies suggested a boost in recall and awareness when an image appears as a meaningful assistance to unrelated information, is most significant for media psychology. This effect may resemble the influence of graphic content on an everyday newspaper or internet reader or a TV news audience.

This approach was heavily influenced by the research of Entman (1991, 1993), who used qualitative as well as quantitative techniques to demonstrate how the American media portrayed two ostensibly identical plane crashes in the 1980s: one as an act of violence and the other as an unfortunate event, depending on who was firing the shots and who was piloting the plane. Huong (2012) employs framing analysis to investigate three high-profile cases of rape that made headlines for all the wrong reasons. Huong researched notable Vietnamese newspapers and how various media sources covered each case differently. Similarly to the media and public outcry over rape in India, Huong writes in his study that "public debate often criticized the decline of ethical standards in Vietnamese society." This study gives a comparative reference and partial justification for the media and public's harsh reaction to the New Delhi rape case, despite the reality that the political situation in Vietnam includes elements that do not exist in India. There are also numerous scholars that devote themselves to the application of the idea from diverse viewpoints. Application of Appraisal Theory to news reports is predominant. According to Wahl-Jorgensen (2013), the reporters "pervaded" their articles with "subjective language" by expressing their emotions, opinions, and praise. The news coverage of rhino poaching is examined by Engelbrecht (2020). According to Grundlingh (2017), there are telltale signs of sensationalism in criminal news coverage. Martin (2019) compares the technological approaches taken by Canada, Germany, and Europe in developing the components of positive evaluation included in their plans and strategies. Based on our review of the literature, we can say that while there have been several ecological studies

of news reports based on the circumstances of other nations, no such research has been conducted in Pakistan. To better understand how reporters in Pakistan construct ecological preferences through language, this study will analyze linguistic elements such as frames, evaluation items, and erasure in climate reports.

3. Methodology

In this study, we use a qualitative descriptive method to examine climate change reports by using the framework of Stibbe's (2015) stories work as linguistic tool. Out of eight Stibbe's stories (including; Ideology, metaphor, framing, evaluation, identity salient and erasure) the researchers chose three stories because they were most directly related to the research questions and objectives: evaluation, erasure, and framing. The researchers have ensured the collection of representative data from reputable sources in Pakistan including all media sources especially online and broadcast website based on the topic climate change using purposeful sampling techniques. Thematic approach is employed to analyze the coded data, to identify the patterns and themes in the representation of ecological conceptions. The study examines the expansion of environmental themes focused on protecting the environment and mitigating the effects of natural disasters. The information for this study came primarily from the readers of news articles about the environment.

4. Results and Discussions

Reports have been analyzed using thematic approach to identify common methods of framing, evaluating, and deleting information used by reporters. This case demonstrates how the use of recurrent framing strategies in well-chosen discourse can lead to far-reaching conceptualizations with the power to sustain a shift in public opinion. The study identified some major frames from selected reports are "*Climate risk have no borders, We are racing against the time, Piecemeal Environment, Fighting with Climate change is a collective endeavor, Agri-food system is largest employer, Energy sector is critical enabler, Pakistan is at crossroads, a monsoon monster*". These perspectives highlight both the positive and negative aspects of climate action, with the negative aspects focusing on the possible economic costs of climate mitigation policies or uncertainty. However, reporters can add a lot of interest to their reports by talking about the elements that affect our environment and climate. These problems originate from a wide variety of interconnected sources including trade-offs, value concerns, science, and economics unequal societal and international implications, and estimates of uncertain future outcomes. Selecting certain features of a situation and emphasizing them in a message is what we mean when we talk about "framing" (Entman, 1993). It follows that people's willingness to participate in and support climate action will differ depending on the frameworks and evaluations they are exposed to (Hornsey and Fielding, 2016; Walker et al., 2018). The Appraisal system is also highly pertinent, as it is inextricably linked to ecological sentiments, perspectives, and valuations through word selection. The study identified the major appraisal items like drying up (4x), huge gap, crop has been lost, storm getting more intense, high level of flooding, worst flooding, global warming is raising, monsoon grow more erratic. According to Martin and White (2005), "Attitude is itself fell into three categories of feeling, 'affect,' 'judgment,' and 'appreciation.'" The above evaluation findings are impacts and evaluations of the state of Pakistan's climate. Inappropriate emotions can lead to low self-esteem and a decrease in motivation to take positive action. This is not an attempt at self-criticism, but rather an attempt to raise awareness of the reader's climate and empower them to take action by describing the dire circumstances in which they find themselves. According to Thompson (2014), Appraisal is an essential component of any text's meaning, and as such, it must be factored into any examination of the text's interpersonal meanings. Because of this, the answer to the question of how one ought to feel in the face of climate change can vary depending on the criteria used to evaluate these pejorative expressions. Erasure is the last detected linguistic feature from the target speech. The term "erasure" is used in a number of contexts to denote that a significant aspect of a discourse has been downplayed or otherwise disregarded. Even if climate change has devastating consequences on animals, the study demonstrates that discussions concerning the interdependence of human and non-human species are disappearing from the discourse that was analyzed. Discourse needs to work to remove animal as living things and concentrate completely on economic factors rather (Stibbe 2001, 2003) in order to create a society which punishes animals unjustly and is environmentally damaging. The dilemma is whether discourses ought to encourage this outlook, confront it, or go for a win-win by striving for harmony, because there is a sense that reporters are cold-hearted and automated, only reacting to measurable economic considerations. Distinctions in Language News articles that employ "framing and evaluation" are helpful since they show us the most severe possibilities and what we can do to prepare for or avoid them. Thus, as "Erasure" demonstrates, destructive actions to the environment are embedded in exploitative relationships between people, impacting their very ability to survive.

5. Conclusion

The present study endeavors to determine whether the climate changes reports under consideration were beneficial, ambivalent, or destructive to the environment. The findings have revealed that erasure of the agent (non-human species) is a prevalent feature in the selected reports. Non-appraisal elements are utilized in evaluation to counteract the destructive approach. Furthermore, it is generally seen that messages that are framed negatively tend to have a greater influence on attitudes and behaviors than messages that are framed positively. The framing and appraisal items of reports, however, make up the discourse ambivalent, while the erasure is illustrated as destructive discourses.

Ecological philosophy and linguistic theories can be used to investigate the good or negative consequences of various linguistic qualities on environmental well-being, such as framing, evaluating, and erasing. Stibbe's *Stories, We Live By* (2015) exhorts us to combat violent, bigoted, and egocentric worldviews by being mindful of the language we employ to describe the world as a network of interdependent relationships among people, non-human world, and the physical setting. The ecological data from news media play a significant part in this process as they usually transmit particularly elites' messages to the general public (Clarke et al., 2015). These consequences can have tremendous influence on public opinion. Events that garner public interest might be seen in quite different lights depending on the lens through which they are viewed. Negative framing can cause an otherwise popular subject or perspective to be seen adversely. Therefore, we may favor negatively framed items or information over those that are well presented. Perhaps if we could better frame the issue, we could gain a stronger base for our position.

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