

FRAMING ANTHROPOCENTRIC IDEOLOGY: AN ECOLOGICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS (EDA) OF HUMAN CENTRALITY IN MEDIA

ⁱ**Qamar Sumaira,**

Lecturer in English, University of Southern Punjab, Multan.

ⁱⁱ**Majid Hussain,**

Language Instructor in Nishat Group of Schools & Colleges, Multan.

ⁱⁱⁱ**Sidra Khalil,**

Lecturer in English, University of Southern Punjab, Multan.

Abstract

Ecolinguistics analyses language to reveal the stories of human beings, judges those stories from an ecological perspective, resists damaging stories, and contributes to improve existing conditions. There is an ideological tension and balance which exists between the modern and moral-commercial ethics where 'Light stories' inspire confidence, progress, passion and the exquisiteness of human being while 'Dark stories' evoke social apprehension, decay, loss, and emotional exploitation. Human activities promote 'Him' as the most favorable choice in its evolution so the study examines the ads through Stibbe's (2015) theoretical stance provided in his book which carries the thematic contrast, linguistic variety, and social relevance to explain the ecology of language for promoting 'Anthropocentric Ideology' in multiple settings of Pakistani advertisements. The study reveals the Pakistan's linguistic ecology that demonstrates cultural diversity, ecological features and ideological assortment through commercial strategies to promote humans as the best creature to survive and striving the Einstein's universally acclaimed truth 'survival of the fittest'.

Key words: *Ecolinguistics, Ecological Discourse Analysis (EDA), ideology, Anthropocentrism, Framing, Advertisements.*

Introduction

The notion that humans are the center of the universe has been a dominant ideology in Western thought for centuries, shaping our relationships with the natural world and informing our attitudes towards the environment. This anthropocentric worldview has been perpetuated through various forms of media, influencing how we perceive and interact with the non-human world. Anthropocentric ideology has got its pros and cons. On one hand, it can drive human progress, innovation, and conservation efforts like sustainable development and wildlife preservation. On the other hand, it can lead to exploitation, environmental degradation, and extinction of species due to deforestation, water pollution and climate change. In media, anthropocentric framing can influence public perception and policy, so it's key is to recognize and critically evaluate these narratives.

This study is significant because it exposes how anthropocentric ideology is embedded in media discourse, influencing public perceptions of human-nature relationships. By uncovering these narratives, we can better understand the role of media in shaping environmental attitudes and behaviors. The findings can inform strategies for promoting eco-centric perspectives and mitigating the impacts of anthropocentric thinking on the environment.

Anthropocentric ideology is indeed presented in Pakistani adverts, particularly in the context of beauty products and tetra pack objects. Research suggests that Pakistani advertisements often imagine an ideal of femininity, reinforcing societal values and consumer attitudes. For instance, studies have shown that beauty ads in Pakistan construct a specific kind of femininity ideal through language and imagery, influencing how women perceive themselves and their roles in society. Similarly, the portrayal of gender relationships in Pakistani advertising often relies on traditional stereotypes, reinforcing patriarchal norms.

Moreover, the representation of culture in Pakistani adverts has also been examined, highlighting the clash between traditional values and modernity. These studies demonstrate

that anthropocentric ideology is indeed present in Pakistani adverts, shaping and reflecting societal attitudes towards gender, culture, and the environment. Some famous linguists who have made significant contributions to Ecolinguistic discourse.

Ferdinand de Saussure is considered as the founder of modern Linguistics and his work on structural linguistics laid the foundation for analyzing language as a system of signs and symbols to provide the difference of deep and surface structures in a language. It is relevant to describe it here as Saussure's contribution signifies our concept about the ecosystem and the place of human in that very environment which human takes it for-granted that it is solely constructed for him. Roman Jakobson as a prominent linguist contributed to structuralist linguistics and language functions, Jakobson's work on phonology, morphology, and semiotics has been influential. Lakoff () as a cognitive linguist explored metaphor and conceptual frameworks. Lakoff's ideas have shaped the discursive understanding of language and its relationship to thought and culture. These linguists have laid the foundation for discourse analysis, which examines how language reflects, shapes, and is shaped by the natural environment and human relationships with it.

Research Questions

1. How is anthropocentric ideology represented in media discourse, and what are the dominant themes and linguistic features that contribute to its construction?
2. In what ways does media discourse perpetuate or challenge human centrality in relation to the natural environment?
3. How do different media platforms (e.g., news, social media, and entertainment) frame anthropocentric ideology?

Research Objectives:

1. To identify and analyze the discursive strategies used in media to construct and reinforce anthropocentric ideology.
2. To examine how media discourse shapes public perceptions of human-nature relationships and the consequences for environmental issues.
3. To explore the role of media in legitimizing or challenging dominant anthropocentric narratives and promoting eco-centric perspectives.

Methodology/ Theoretical Framework

The present research is a qualitative and interpretative in its nature, where Stibbe's (2015) theoretical implications are selected for Ecolinguistic discourse. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) examines the language, imagery, and visual elements in advertisements to uncover the underlying ideologies and power dynamics. Multimodality is analyzed as the interplay between text, image, and sound in advertisements to understand how they convey anthropocentric ideology. The analysis is drawn on theories of ecolinguistics, which explore the relationships between language, environment, and society. The anthropocentric ideology is used as a critical lens to analyze how advertisements position humans as central to the environment. It recognizes that language and discourse shape the understanding of reality, including human-nature relationships also it highlights how power operates through language and discourse to reinforce or challenge anthropocentric ideologies. There are eight types of stories in total, which the book '*Ecolinguistics: Language, Ecology and the Stories We Live by*' labels as ideologies, framings, metaphors, evaluations, identities, convictions, erasure and salience (Stibbe' 2015). The matrix to explore all these stories from the selected text is provided in the findings of this research. The data is selected from Pakistani advertisements available on social media. Purposive sampling is used to select advertisements that reflect the Ecolinguistic ideology and human interaction in the given ads.

Data Analysis

Stibbe's (2015) Ecolinguistic framework helps to uncover the complex ways in which Ecolinguistic ideology is constructed and reinforced as applied for advertisement analysis.

- Metaphors that reinforce anthropocentric ideology (e.g., "Mother Nature")
- Visual elements that represent nature (e.g., images of trees, animals, or landscapes) Language that positions humans as central to the environment (e.g., "our planet," "natural resources")
- Themes that emerge from the data, such as "human-nature separation" or "environmental stewardship"

Data Analysis

Three adverts have been chosen through purposive sampling where the nature is represented as an amplifier to the present topic.



Advertisement 1: Dream Home Ad

The “*Find Your Dream Home*” advertisement constructs an idealized relationship between humans and nature by placing a modern house on a floating green island surrounded by clean skies and greenery. From an ecolinguistic perspective, the ad uses nature as a symbolic background to promote consumerist aspirations such as home ownership, comfort, and family success. The words “dream home” emotionally associate happiness and security with private property, while the natural imagery suggests ecological harmony without presenting any real environmental commitment. This creates an anthropocentric discourse in which nature is valued mainly for enhancing human lifestyle and commercial appeal. The advertisement also reflects green consumerism because environmental beauty is aestheticized and commodified to market real estate, potentially functioning as greenwashing since sustainability practices are not explicitly mentioned. The ecosystem becomes a decorative background for real-estate consumption. The ad implies that environmental well-being can be achieved through private property ownership. This reflects an **anthropocentric discourse**, a worldview where nature exists mainly to support human desires. Nature is represented here as:

- **controlled**
- **aestheticized**
- **subordinate to human comfort**



Advertisement 2: Refrigerator Ad

The refrigerator advertisement combines environmental imagery with technological branding through expressions such as “Nature Lock Technology” and “Fresh 20 Days.” Lush green landscapes and bright natural scenery visually connect the appliance with freshness, purity, and ecological well-being. Ecolinguistically, the ad constructs a discourse where technology appears capable of preserving nature and improving healthy living. However, the environment is mainly represented as a marketing resource that increases the desirability of the product rather than as an ecosystem with intrinsic value. The advertisement promotes green consumerism by suggesting that environmental freshness and responsible living can be achieved through purchasing advanced appliances. Since no concrete environmental evidence such as energy efficiency or sustainability certification is provided, the ad may also reflect greenwashing through its heavy reliance on ecological symbolism. The advertisement promotes a refrigerator marketed as one of the ‘Top Quality 2025 Refrigerators in Pakistan portraying-Nature Lock Technology’. The visual shows:

- a modern refrigerator,
- lush green hills and forests,
- bright natural lighting and the slogan-“Nature Lock Technology – Fresh 20 Days”

The advertisement strongly associates the appliance with freshness, nature, and environmental purity.



Advertisement 3: Cosmetic Product Ad

The cosmetic product advertisement uses minimalist design, wooden textures, and earthy visual elements to associate the product with nature, purity, and wellness. From an ecolinguistic perspective, the ad employs green semiotics to create the impression of an eco-friendly and natural lifestyle. The placement of the bottle on wooden slices symbolically links beauty and personal care with environmental harmony and authenticity. However, nature functions primarily as a commercial aesthetic that increases consumer trust and product attractiveness. The advertisement reinforces green consumerism by encouraging the belief that ecological awareness and healthy beauty practices can be achieved through consumption. Although the visuals imply sustainability and natural purity, the absence of explicit ecological claims or certifications suggests a possible greenwashing strategy where environmental imagery is used more for branding than for genuine ecological responsibility. The wooden background implies that the product originates from or harmonizes with nature. However, nature is not represented as an ecosystem with intrinsic value; instead, it is used symbolically to enhance the commercial appeal of the product to reflect an anthropocentric ideology.



Advertisement 4: Surf Excel Ad

This Surf Excel advertisement reinforces a strong anthropocentric ideology by framing the natural world, where nature is only valuable as it serves human competitive achievement. Following Stibbe's (2015) model, it can be assumed that the ad utilizes ideological framing that positions the earth (mud and grass) as a 'stain' as a negative byproduct of human activity, which triggers the need for industrial chemical intervention. The slogan "Pulls out deep tough stains" functions as a destructive stories-we-live-by, suggesting that human-caused environmental contact is a problem to erase rather than it proves to be a harmonious interaction. Moreover, the ad exhibits erasure of the ecosystem's intrinsic value; the soccer field is not a living biome but a sterilized stage for the "champion" narrative, where the only "natural" element emphasized is the dirt that threatens the cleanliness of human-made textiles. This commodification of nature as a mere obstacle for a goalkeeper's success establishes the belief that humans stand above and apart from the environment.

Findings of the research

The following visual themes illustrate the stories we live by in media, where nature represents primarily a resource for human needs. It is represented in the form of the relationship between the Stibbe's theoretical stance and the related text in the given table.

Sr no	Stibbe's Stances	Explanation	Linguistic Representations in Media discourse
1	Ideology	A foundational worldview shared by a society that dictates how humans interact with non-human life, treating anthropocentrism as a natural and unquestioned truth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It positions humans as superior, separate, and the sole possessors of intrinsic value. Structured absences where ecosystems are erased from socio-economic narratives. For example deforestation,
2	Evaluation	Systems of language that assign positive or negative worth to aspects of reality, prioritizing human utility over ecological well-being.	<p>Media discourses routinely evaluate ecosystems purely through their utility in human industry rather than their independent right to exist.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appraisal patterns using positive descriptors (<i>profitable, efficient</i>) for exploitation. • Negative adjectives (<i>barren, tough stain, polluted</i>).
3	Identity	The linguistic construction of boundaries defining who belongs to the moral community, separating "Humanity" from "Nature."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pronoun allocation (<i>we, us, our</i>) restricted to human actors. • Exclusion of non-human

		entities from agentic roles.
4	Framing Using a familiar conceptual area to structure an environmental target domain, making exploitation look necessary or harmless.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The "Resource" frame transforming living systems into commodities (<i>communities, family, and forest</i>). • Media outlets use specific frames to make environmental exploitation seem natural, necessary, or harmless to human audiences.
5	Metaphor A specific type of framing where a concrete, mechanical domain maps onto a living ecological entity, stripping it of life. It exposes how language constructs the boundaries of who belongs to the moral community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Machine metaphor (<i>ecosystem mechanisms, planet engineering</i>). • The Factory metaphor (<i>soil production capacity, marine outputs</i>). • Anthropocentric media creates a rigid, binary division between "Humanity" (the subjects with agency) and "Nature" (the passive objects).
6	Conviction It refers to mental models or stories about whether a description of the world is true, certain, uncertain, or false.	These mental stories are manifested through specific linguistic indicators classified by their level of certainty, e.g. hedging, modality and facticity patterns.
7	Erasure The linguistic suppression, marginalization, or complete omission of non-human entities from media discourses where they are directly impacted.	<p>The linguistic suppression, marginalization, or complete omission of non-human animals and the physical environment from discourses where they are directly affected.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passive voice to hide corporate perpetrators (<i>"habitats were lost"</i>). • Nominalization to obscure environmental

violence (*deforestation, extraction*).

8 Saliency	The linguistic foregrounding of non-human entities as living, sentient, and valuable subjects to counter human centrality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of animate pronouns for animals (<i>he, she, who</i>). • Vivid sensory descriptions of ecological systems as active subjects.
-------------------	--	--

Findings

Some potential findings of the above mentioned textual analysis can be concluded as:

1. **Anthropocentric ideology is prevalent:** The analysis reveals that Pakistani advertisements predominantly frame humans as central to the environment, reinforcing anthropocentric ideology.
2. **Nature is often represented as a resource:** Advertisements frequently depict nature as a resource for human consumption, reinforcing the notion that nature exists for human benefit.
3. **Human-nature separation is emphasized:** The advertisements often create a sense of separation between humans and nature, perpetuating the idea that humans are distinct from and superior to the natural world.
4. **Anthropocentric metaphors are common:** Advertisements frequently employ metaphors that reinforce anthropocentric ideology, such as "Mother Nature" or "conquering nature."
5. **Limited representation of eco-centric perspectives:** The analysis reveals that eco-centric perspectives, which prioritize the well-being of the environment, are relatively rare in Pakistani advertisements.
6. **Nature as a Setting for Human Comfort and Pleasure:** Advertisements for travel agencies, real estate, or various lifestyle products often use scenic natural landscapes (mountain ranges, coastal areas, parks) as desirable backdrops for human leisure activities.
7. **Nature as a backdrop for Modern Infrastructure/Development:** In advertisements related to real estate development or public works, images might show a new housing society or a new road constructed in a previously natural area.
8. **Greenwashing Imagery:** Some ads use 'green' colors and nature-related imagery to imply eco-friendliness, even if the product's production process is unsustainable.

Implications:

1. **Reinforcing anthropocentric ideology:** The findings suggest that Pakistani advertisements contribute to the perpetuation of anthropocentric ideology, which may exacerbate environmental problems by reinforcing human dominance over nature.
2. **Influence on environmental attitudes:** The prevalence of anthropocentric ideology in advertisements may shape public attitudes towards the environment, potentially undermining efforts to promote environmental sustainability.

3. **Need for eco-centric messaging:** The study highlights the importance of incorporating eco-centric perspectives in advertisements to promote a more sustainable and equitable relationship between humans and the environment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the prevalence of anthropocentric ideology in Pakistani advertisements has significant implications for environmental sustainability. By reinforcing human centrality and nature's instrumental value, these advertisements perpetuate a worldview that prioritizes human interests over environmental well-being. To mitigate the researchers suggest incorporating eco-centric perspectives and promoting sustainable narratives in media. This can be achieved by highlighting the intrinsic value of nature, showcasing human-nature interconnectedness, and encouraging environmentally responsible behaviors.

Some actionable suggestions to improve environmental conditions are:

- Promote eco-friendly products and services through targeted advertising
- Incorporate environmental education and awareness campaigns in media
- Encourage sustainable lifestyles and behaviors through social media influencers and public figures
- Support eco-centric storytelling in Pakistani media, such as documentaries and films highlighting environmental issues
- Develop and promote environmental policies that prioritize sustainability and conservation

The findings and discussions can bring forth such strategies which promote environmental sustainability and encourage a more nuanced understanding of human-nature relationship through media representations. The study also leaves a room for further explorations of light and dark stories portrayed on media and the Greenwashing phenomenon in advertisements.

References

- Ashraf, M. A., & Sultana, S. (2020). Representation of culture in Pakistani television advertisements. *Journal of Media Studies*, 35(1), 1-18.
- Carvalho, A. (2008). Media(ted) discourse and society: A critical discourse analysis of the media coverage of climate change. *Journalism Studies*, 9(2), 161-177.
- Fill, A., & Mühlhäusler, P. (2001). *Ecolinguistics: A reader*. Continuum.
- Hayward, T. (1997). Anthropocentrism: A misunderstood problem. *Environmental Values*, 6(1), 49-63.
- Khan, M. A., & Aziz, F. (2018). Portrayal of women in Pakistani television advertisements: A content analysis. *Journal of Managerial Sciences*, 12(2), 1-14.
- Lewis, S. L., & Maslin, M. A. (2015). Defining the Anthropocene. *Nature*, 519(7542), pp. 171-180.
- Merchant, C. (1980). *The death of nature: Women, ecology, and the scientific revolution*. Harper & Row.
- Naess, A. (1973). The shallow and the deep, long-range ecology movement. A summary. *Inquiry*, 16(1-4), 95-100.
- Norton, B. G. (1984). Environmental ethics and weak anthropocentrism. *Environmental Ethics*, 6(2), 131-148.
- O'Neill, O. (1997). "Environmental Values, Anthropocentrism and Speciesism." *Environmental Values*, 6(2), pp. 127-134. White Horse Press.
- Plumwood, V. (1993). *Feminism and the mastery of nature*. Routledge.
- Qureshi, I. A., & Khan, M. A. (2019). Environmental concerns in Pakistani television advertisements: A content analysis. *Journal of Environmental Studies*, 33(1), 1-12.
- Stibbe, A. (2015). *Ecolinguistics: Language, ecology and the stories we live by*. Routledge.

- White, L. (1967). The historical roots of our ecologic crisis. *Science*, 155(3767), 1203–1207.

ⁱ Qamar Sumaira, Lecturer in English, University of Southern Punjab, Multan.

ⁱⁱ Majid Hussain, Nishat Group of Schools and Colleges, Multan.

ⁱⁱⁱ Sidra Khalil, Lecturer in English, University of Southern Punjab, Multan.