



AN ECOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF SALIENCE IN THE CAMEROONIAN NEWSPAPER

Walter Abo Acha¹⁾

¹Government High School Bessi-Awum, and Department of English, University of Yaounde I
email: achawaltz@yahoo.co.uk

DOI: 10.23917/kls.v8i2.16640

Received: May 31th, 2022. Revised: May 6th, 2023. Accepted: May 10th, 2023
Available Online: December 28th, 2023. Published Regularly: December 28th, 2023

Abstract

Environmental communication plays a vital role in creating awareness about the importance of nature conservation, and actions needed and/or put in place to safeguard it. This research piece investigates discursive patterns that activate ecological salience in the Cameroonian newspaper. Analysis focused, firstly, on the identification and interpretation of pragma-linguistic entities marked with valorisation and conservation of the biophysical environment. The data comprised forty (40) newspaper articles selected from ten newspaper publishers in Cameroon. Salience-evoking elements in environmental texts were identified and interpreted using the ecolinguistic framework, specifically the model of deixis, postulated by Bang and Døør (1993). The descriptive statistical method (DSM) was used. This involved qualitative and quantitative analyses of the articles; starting with the identification, quantification and interpretation of linguistic and pragmatic entities in the texts. Findings revealed that the Cameroonian press tactfully used language categories depicting the ideals, relevance and conservation of the country's ecosystems. Ecologically valorising markers found included adjectives, hedging, headlines and slogan, eco-dignifying metaphors and intertextuality (the evocation of texts relating to the beauty and conservation of nature). Generally, it was observed that the Cameroonian press used language strategically to project a positive image (importance) of her existing flora, fauna, reptiles and fish, and biosphere (water bodies, land and the atmosphere). Cognizant of the sustenance nature offers earthly life, it is prudent for the media to cover nature stories regularly, and in language forms that align with, and reinforce, global efforts to valorise, protect and conserve the ecosystem.

Keywords: Ecolinguistics, ecology, salience, nature protection, discourse

Abstrak

Komunikasi lingkungan memainkan peran penting dalam menciptakan kesadaran tentang pentingnya konservasi alam, dan tindakan yang diperlukan dan/atau dilakukan untuk menjaganya. Karya penelitian ini menyelidiki pola diskursif yang mengaktifkan arti-penting ekologis di surat kabar Kamerun. Analisis difokuskan, pertama, pada identifikasi dan interpretasi entitas pragma-linguistik yang ditandai dengan valorisasi dan konservasi lingkungan biofisik. Data terdiri dari empat puluh (40) artikel surat kabar yang dipilih dari sepuluh penerbit surat kabar di Kamerun. Unsur-unsur yang membangkitkan arti-penting dalam teks-teks lingkungan diidentifikasi dan diinterpretasikan menggunakan kerangka ekolinguistik, khususnya model deiksis, yang didalilkan oleh Bang dan Døør (1993). Metode

statistik deskriptif (DSM) digunakan. Hal ini melibatkan analisis kualitatif dan kuantitatif terhadap artikel-artikel tersebut; dimulai dengan identifikasi, kuantifikasi dan interpretasi entitas linguistik dan pragmatis dalam teks. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa pers Kamerun dengan bijaksana menggunakan kategori bahasa yang menggambarkan cita-cita, relevansi dan konservasi ekosistem negara tersebut. Penanda nilai ekologis yang ditemukan mencakup kata sifat, lindung nilai, judul dan slogan, metafora yang bermartabat terhadap lingkungan, dan intertekstualitas (kebangkitan teks yang berkaitan dengan keindahan dan konservasi alam). Secara umum, pers Kamerun terlihat menggunakan bahasa secara strategis untuk memproyeksikan citra positif (pentingnya) flora, fauna, reptil dan ikan, serta biosfer (perairan, tanah, dan atmosfer) yang ada. Sadar akan rezeki yang ditawarkan alam kepada kehidupan di bumi, maka adalah bijaksana bagi media untuk meliput kisah-kisah alam secara teratur, dan dalam bentuk bahasa yang selaras dengan, dan memperkuat, upaya global untuk meningkatkan nilai, melindungi dan melestarikan ekosistem.

Kata Kunci: Ekolinguistik, ekologi, arti-penting, perlindungan alam, wacana

How to Cite: Acha. W. A, 2023. An Ecolinguistic Analysis of Saliency in The Cameroonian Newspaper. *Kajian Linguistik dan Sastra*, Vol.8 (2), pp.218-240.

Corresponding Author:

Walter Abo Acha, University of Yaounde I

Email: achawaltz@yahoo.co.uk

1. Introduction

As the most powerful circuit of information, Van Dijk (2015) postulates that the media plays a frontline role in the transmission and negotiation of social meaning. This prominent role is imputed to the trust the public has in media information and, for Fairclough (1989), the influence it has in their lives. Even though some media linguists, for instance Ardrèvol-Abreu (2015: 429), have impugned the objectivity of the media in the projection of reality, Stibbe (2015) holds firm to the conviction that the media, via stories covered and language choices, has potentials that showcase the ideals of nature. Positive Discourse Analysis (PDA) is the label Martin (2006) gives such environmentally idealising discourses. Discursive practices are, therefore, positive if they exhibit and/or recommend alternative discourse that enhances environmental sustainability. Alternative discourse means novel patterns (including metaphors and stories) of constructing nature positively and protectively.

Parallelling the commitment in other academic fields, contemporary environmental stakes have become a major pre-occupation among linguistic researchers. The application of environmental theories and concepts to Linguistics is an exhibition of the 'ecological turn' in linguistic science. Peculiar of this turn is the shift from strict investigation of structural linguistic concepts to the expression of profound concern for the degrading biophysical environment. This paradigm shift, termed 'Ecolinguistics', was first used in Einar Haugen's "Ecology of Language" (1972). It has galvanised what Stibbe (2012: 1) brands an 'ecological turn' in linguistic science. This turn, thus, embraces an eclectic research perspective on the interaction between language and the biophysical environment.

Bearing in mind the anthropogenic roots of the current ecological distress, Priest (2016) reckons communication as an indispensable contribution to environmental advocacy. It creates awareness about collective actions that could enhance nature conservation and abatement of the warming climate. Media commitment to environmental communication, according to Ebim (2016), justifies why after politics, sports and entertainment, the public media space is replete with environmental news. This aims to contribute to environmental friendliness by doing what Cameron (2012: vii) postulates as 'verbal hygiene'. This involves "[...] motley collection of discourses and practices through which people attempt to 'clean up' and make its structure or its use conform more closely to their ideals of beauty, truth, efficiency, logic, correctness and civility". Conscious of the worth of nature to earthly existence, this work seeks to bring out language uses in the Cameroonian press that are nature-idealising and conserving, thus activating ecological saliency.

1.1 Ecological Saliency and Related Concepts

Profound in the relationship between language and ecology is the fact that the latter shapes the former and vice versa. This makes language a tool used to construct nature positively, thus, creating awareness about the importance of nature to humanity. Stibbe (2015: 16) defines saliency as 'a story in people's minds that an area of life is important or worthy of attention'. These stories are ideal discourses (language and ideologies) about the environment, reinforcing sustainability and conservation. It is worth stating that the term 'stories' is adopted from Stibbe (2015) to refer to environmental discourses and ideologies (beliefs) that language conceptualises and transmits. In effect, saliency relates to language patterns that give prominence and relevance to the biophysical environment. A text reverberates with saliency when nature and its phenomena are referred to and framed in a meaningful way.

With inspiration from environmental attributes (size, colour and place in the foreground, etcetera) that give prominence to nature in discourse, Stibbe (2015) has identified two patterns that the biophysical environment is valued in discourse; through vivid and concrete (specific) depictions. Vivid depiction concerns the use of clear and succinct language constructs void of generalities and abstractions about the ecosystem. Concrete depictions relate to language element in positive environmental discourses that are encoded with nature-appealing entities, say 'leaves, branches, deer, antlers, ant and grasses. Stibbe (2012; 2015), in fact, projects metonymies as effective pragmatic resources that attribute life and importance to the ecosystem.

Ecocentrism is a saliency-evoking ecosophy that considers all lives as important, and worth protecting. Stibbe (2015) describes ecocentrism as a more inclusive ideology that considers all lives; including humans. It is a more radical thought that opposes the age-old human control and/or dominance over other natural entities. Ecocentrism, in fact, advocates ecological parity between humans and nature. For this parity to be effective, humans are conscientised to consider

biotic and non-biotic entities as having rights that must not be infringed, like those of human. In essence, the campaign for the respect of environmental rights, as is the motif of ecocentrist, is an advocacy for environmental justice.

Riggio (2012) is another researcher who is cautious and emphatic about the doctrine of ecocentric morality in discourses. Ecocentrism is described as an ecological concept that is ecosystem-oriented. It thus propagates the philosophy that the ecosystem is at the centre of earthly life, and should be conserved. Riggio (*ibid*: 2), in fact, avers that ecocentric morality gives much premium to the 'ecosystem or planetary biosphere as a whole', considering that it is a dignified entity that must be preserved above human interests. Ecosystem conservation, in a nutshell, supersedes all human interests; taking into cognizance the fact that planetary biosphere sustains human life. This sustainability is attainable within the ecocentric morality framework: an ideological mould of 'utilitarian' mindsets that prioritise the general well-being of human and non-human species.

Arne Naess' (1995) deep ecology concept is another powerful ideology that buttresses ecological saliency in [environmental] discourse. Smith and Gough (2015: 38) define deep ecology as "an ecological philosophy that promotes an ecocentric lifestyle to remedy the problems of depleting resources and planetary degradation". Apparently, a more theoretical and contextual development of ecological saliency intersects with Arne Naess' deep ecology concept. Naess (1995) propounds the oneness of nature (parity between culture and nature) with the justification that humanity is indifferent and domineering to biospecies that are different from them. Deep ecology, according to Naess (*ibid*) creates an identity of solidarity, and an aura of 'intense empathy' that deters human beings from plundering biosphere. The environmental consciousness at the hub of this ideology stems from the advocacy for the respect of the human-like intrinsic values of nature.

In all, the concepts of ecological saliency and ecocentrism overlap or have a common motif; which is the recognition of the rights and protection of the natural environment. While saliency is the discourse (style), ecocentrism is the ecosphy (ideology) realised by language. To summarise this, Smith and Gough (*ibid*: 39) state that discourse that self-dignifies the natural environment reverberates with 'connectedness to nature; biospherical egalitarianism; wilderness preservation; population management; biodiversity and reduction of resource use'.

1.2 Ecological Consciousness in Linguistic Science

The term 'ecology', as Fill (2001) reveals, was coined in 1866 by a German zoologist, Ernst Haeckel. It originated from the Greek lexical components 'Oikos' (meaning habitation and place) and 'logos' (denoting study or science). Ecology was founded, therefore, as a science that studies the habitation of species. By 'ecology', Ernst Haeckel referred to a discrete scientific discipline that studies the relationship between species and their biotic and non-biotic environments.

Seconding Haeckel, Fill (ibid) posits that ecology, ipso facto, means the study of the interrelations among species, and between organisms and their natural environment.

Moreover, language ecology explains the process of interaction between language and its environment apropos of human ecology. In expatiation of Einar Haugen's view, Garner (2005: 94) posits that language interacts with, and expresses a community's history, religion, demography and cultural values. These social variables, in turn, exert pressure on the use of language in a community. Haugen (1972) took keen notice of the interface between language and its environment in an imminent field he terms 'human ecology.' In his discussion of the interaction between language and its speech community, Haugen's (ibid: 325) thinks that:

Language ecology could be a natural extension of this kind of study [i.e. human ecology], and has long been pursued under such names as psycholinguistics, ethnolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, sociolinguistics and sociology of language.

Haugen (op. cit) evinces the interaction between language and its socio-cultural environment in the linguistic approaches unpacked above. The interaction between Haugen's metaphorical organism called language and its environment (speech) community), is, as Garner (ibid) judges, "[...] more complex than, for example, that between a cat and the Wild" because a language environment has "both man-made (like culture) and natural" variables that regulate the trajectory of interactions that are void in the cat, Wild interaction.

Haugen's (1972) adoption of the term 'ecology' as a metaphorical referent for language causes Garner (ibid) to perceive ecology is an entity with three related components: (i) an organism; (ii) its environment; and (iii) process(es) connecting the organism to its environment. Salient to this work is the analogy between language and organism, and language community and environment. In succinct terms, language is, for Haugen (ibid), an organism with its ever-changing [growing (expanding) or dwindling] speech community being its environment. As an organism, Haugen's postulation is that language, like humans and other organisms, has an anatomy, genealogy (family), let alone potentials, to live, grow (expand) via contact, change, procreate (give rise to dialects/patois) and above all, attrite or die. With this observation in mind, the essence of Haugen's 'Language Ecology' was to inspire linguists to switch from the routine and saturated structural linguistics (grammar and phonology) to a more innovative and productive approach that sacrifices rules and structure for language context and meaning that befriend (valorise and conserve) nature.

The transfer of the term 'ecology' to linguistics resulted in the blended coinage 'ecolinguistique', first used by the French linguist, Claude Hagege, in his book *L'Homme de Parole* (1985: 144a). 'Ecolinguistique' was a linguistic manifestation of the ecological consciousness, otherwise the 'ecological turn' that trended in diverse academic disciplines. In his definition, which contemporary ecolinguists have criticised as lopsided, Hagege (ibid) states that

'ecolinguistique' is 'the study of linguistic representation of natural phenomena'. Blended with the clip 'eco' (from the term ecology) and linguistics, Steffensen and Fill (2014: 9) consider ecolinguistics as a novel paradigm that investigates the relationship between language and the environment, otherwise known to as 'language-nature relations'.

Environmental consciousness in many disciplines has culminated to a novel field named environmental communication, which Marciano (2011: 12) alternatively refers to as 'green discourse'. In this regard, Nitsch (2000: 222) considers environmental communication a "planned activity, the purpose of which is to contribute to an improvement in resource conservation and environmentally sensitive practices within the society". Like other subject-specific strategies to enforce ecological parity, environmental communication, from a linguistic stance, implicates the use of diverse linguistic and pragmatic resources to create public awareness about environmental sustainability (conservation). This field, thus, assigns ecolinguists the duty to investigate linguistic and pragmatic resources, which Stibbe (2015) postulates as 'new stories', in environmental texts that realise ecological consciousness.

The radical shift towards the natural (biophysical) environment after the 1990s was triggered by the consciousness and determination of contemporary linguists (Peter Mühlhäusler, Luis Maffi, Alwin fill, Joshua Nash, and Arrian Stibbe) to uncover and resist biased language and ideologies in environmental texts. These linguists awoke consciousness on the fact that language has potentials to save or endanger the natural environment. This ecological perspective, in fact, has as motif the use of language to expose and abate environmental injustices and the deepening environmental crisis which Haugen (1972) neither evoked or redressed in his approach. The emergence of this contemporary approach is, for Stibbe (2012; 2013; 2015), opposition to indifference to the dangers and plagues of biodiversity extinction and the devastating climate change. In essence, this paradigm, recommends the use of discursive patterns and ecocentric beliefs that safeguard the natural environment.

Different terms have been coined to qualify the novel and innovating, but radical approach contemporary ecolinguistics has adopted. While Stibbe (2012: 1) brands these contemporary trends the 'ecological turn', Rigby (2015) alternatively considers it a 'paradigm shift'. This coinage is buttressed in the title of her presentation (paper) "Humanities Beyond the Human: The Ecological Turn". The term 'paradigm shift', as Rigby (ibid) explains, is an inspiration from Jonathan Bates article, "Living with the Weather" (1996). Contextualising the concept of 'paradigm shift' in ecolinguistics, Bate (ibid: 436) explains that:

[...] we are in a period of Kuhnian paradigm shift. It is shift which could be described in a variety of ways. Perhaps: a New Geography is replacing the New Historicism. Or to locate it in an incider context: cold war etism is dying, Global Warming Etsm is about to be born.

As stated above, Stibbe (ibid) variedly qualifies this ecological 'paradigm shift' as multidimensional research explorations on the relationship between humans, language and the environment. In essence, ecolinguistic researchers have forayed into the rapport between language and the biophysical environment. This relation and beliefs (cultural variables) inherent in language are evident in the representation of the environment in discourse. In this 'ecological turn', the motif is to use language to secure what Rigby (op. cit) terms 'sustainability': changing behaviour and enforcing synergy between human and non-human agencies to abate and/or mitigate Climange and Glowarm.

Concerned with the dialectical relationship between ecology and language, Fill and Mühlhäusler (2001) posit that this consciousness, dubbed 'ecolinguistic turn', considers language a conduit and equally habitat for ecocentric and/or anthropocentric thought and attitudes. This paradigm shift aims to advocate ecologically sustaining discourse, which Stibbe (2015) proposes as 'new stories'; that advocate respect, defend and promote environmental rights. In essence, the ecolinguistic paradigm has as mission, the search for positive discourses that can serve and preserve the biophysical environment. To state it otherwise, the ecological turn, by obligation, is a messianic linguistic dimension that prescribes the use of eco-friendly linguistic resources that advocate the peace and safety of the biophysical environmental.

Steffensen and Fill (2014) have clamoured for an empirical linguistic orientation in that is sensitive to and relates wholesomely with nature: biodiversity and biosphere. The proximity between language and nature, according to Steffensen and Fill (ibid: 7), will 'bring language to life and life to language', in other words, use language to check environmental abuses, thus ensure the survival of nature. In the euphoria of this 'paradigm shift', Steffensen and Fill (ibid) state metaphorically that ecological linguists, notably Fill (1995; 1996), have alternatively and practically orientated:

Linguists to external landmarks [Malinowski's term] that could lead the language wanderer from the structure Wasteland into a fertile terrain of human activity, saturated by language, interactivity and coexistence.

The debate and divergence relating to Haugen's (op. cit.) notion of 'environment of a language', just as the term ecolinguistics itself, has inspired Fill and Steffensen (ibid) to advance four 'strands' (approaches) that underpin the ecological turn in linguistics, which form the basis of ecolinguistic interpretations. In their analysis of the ontological postures of linguists about the 'environment of language', it is postulated that different linguistic schools construe language as existing in four spheres: (i) symbolic ecology; (ii) natural ecology; (iii) sociocultural ecology; and (iv) cognitive ecology.

1.3 Ecological Saliency in the Media

Journalistic discourse, according to Tong (2014), actively creates public awareness about the threats associated with the devastation of the biophysical environment. The Chinese media is found to be dominated by ever-new stories exposing environmental dangers, and sanctions meted on perpetrators. Using the framing theory, these environmental challenges are conceptualised as social problems that warrant prompt political solution. It is with respect to this that China's political elite slams the press with subversive accusations of framing environmental risks in patterns that incriminate economic investors (capitalist), thus undermining the country's prioritised industrial (economic) growth. Contrary to Tong's (ibid) critical study that investigates environmental awareness by analysing erosion discourse, this work, nonetheless, studies broad-based conservation discourses to bring out discursive choices that activate ecocentric morality.

Music is another media genre in which nature constructs are preponderant. According to Ghorbanpour (2016), nature songs, also coined 'eco-lyrics', evoke environmental saliency with recourse to varied language resources. In the 'eco-lyrical' analysis above, it is realised that nature songs are a great repository of varied stories that model the natural environment in unique, positive styles. Ghorbanpour's (ibid) findings reveal that nature songs make use of nature-conserving language patterns that situate humans within nature. Environmental advocacy is encoded in discursive forms like naming, metaphorical and personifying styles that idealise nature as a 'living thing' (person) and as 'a mother' who must not be oppressed and exhausted by patriarchal ideologies. Personification, for Blackmore et al. (2013: 65), rekindles and reiterates the connection between humans and animals, schematised as 'Animals like us'. Unlike the genre analysis of nature songs above, this study conducts a pragmalinguistic analysis of environmentalism in the Cameroonian press.

Olayiwola (2015) reveals that the media is very efficacious in transmitting and legitimising religious ideologies that reinforce the valorisation, protection and protection of nature. Religious discourse in the public media conscientises the public about equity and respect for the entities that characterise the universe. Quoting Yussuf Ali's English Translation of the Quran (6: 36), Olayiwola (ibid: 5) states that 'there is not an animal (that lives) on the earth, or a being that flies on its wings, but (forms part of) communities like you'. Islamic communication preaches respect and equity among God's creatures, part of which is nature. This aligns with varied arguments proffered by Stibbe (2003; 2006; 2013; 2015) about ecological parity, with humanity placed in (not above) nature. Environmental categories that constitute Allah's sacred beings include 'weather, climate, vegetation, plants, animals, humans, rainfall and wind' and so on. Islamic communicators proscribe environmental depletion because, in tandem with the pillars of the Quran, it is a profane act of oppression on Allah's (God) creature, and therefore, challenging divine purpose and existence. In essence, Islamic communicators frame nature as Allah's gift to

mankind, and so, humans have the divine duty to protect and conserve.

In the search for ecologically sustaining stories, otherwise theorised eco-civilisation by Cowley (2019), EcoCDA researchers have postulated that discourses on animal entertainment are ecologically dependable. Newspapers that project the circus have been found to be a discursively fruitful endeavour that wards off the exploitation of animals by humans. From the perspective of the EcoCDA, circus discourse has been proven to be positive discourse that realises five principal frames, viz: The circus: (i) is an environmentally sustaining initiative (activity); (ii) is tangible a prove of harmony between human and non-human environments; (iii) naturalises culture-driven behaviours; (iv) exalts captivity over the wild habitat; and (v) obliterates domesticity and wildness. Among these frames, what is of interest is the activation of harmony frame in circus discourse. This is applauded in this work as reconciliation between humans and the biophysical environment.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, an indigenous study on the analysis of environmental advocacy in the media has been carried out by Angwah (2019). This work investigates the frequency and mitigating pattern in climate change communication in the Cameroonian newspaper. Having as data thirty editions of three Cameroon leading newspaper publishers, results show a relatively insignificant publication (coverage) of climate change stories pertaining to the 'stark realities' of climate change strikes in Cameroon. This skimpy coverage of climate change stories in the Cameroonian press, thus, emanates from journalists' insatiable thirst for what Angwah (ibid: 21) terms 'current' news. Contrary to the research piece reviewed above, this present study conducts an ecocritical discourse analysis of the content of 100 articles purposefully selected from ten Cameroonian newspapers, in investigation of ecocentrism, anthropocentrism and climate change frames.

Another indigenous work [in]directly related to the current study is Ubanako and Ekembe's (2015). In the stylistic analysis of a Cameroon literary novel, *The Lady with a Beard*, by Alobwed'Epie, findings have it that language use in the text is a product of the socio-environmental experiences of authors and their characters. In alignment with the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis wherein language usage is theorised as an offshoot of speakers' cultural realities, it is found that Alobwed'Epie and characters in *The Lady with a Beard* renew the canonical linguistic system of English using lexico-semantic choices that underpin specific cultural concepts. The language patterns and choices show great proof of mutual dependence between language (culture) and the biophysical environment. The animal metaphors (say tigress and lioness) found are strongly marked with feminine bravery and childbirth, as opposed to masculine bravery. Cognizant of the absence of gender categories for tiger and lion in the authors and characters' cultural psyche, the use of the gender-evocating metaphors 'tigress' and 'lioness' to attribute the heroine are indicative of the patriarchal nature of the Bakossi society, where the novel is set.

Unlike the aforementioned study that carries a linguistic analysis of a Cameroon novel, the current study, rather, conducts an ecolinguistic analysis of ecocentric markers and ideologies in the Cameroonian press.

1.4 Theoretical Framework Adopted

The data for this study was analysed using the ecolinguistic framework postulated by Bang and Døør (1993). This framework empowers language and linguistics with the neutrality and objectivity that it takes investigate nature stories (discourses) that crystallise the virtues of nature, thus, advocating protection and conservation. Projects discourse as part of the ecological crisis, the ecolinguistic framework seeks to ignite consciousness about the role language plays in the valorisation and conservation of nature. The advocacy for nature protection and conservation is, according to Jørgensen and Philips (2002), part of the social change that discourse galvanises. The social change intended is that of self-realisation about the respect for the rights of existence (conservation) of the nature.

Among the three approaches advanced in this framework, the model of deixis was adopted in this work. Model of deixis is an approach of the dialectal theory of language in which the syntactic and semantic fabric of a text is interpreted and/or understood within particular context (situation). The term deixis is a loan word from Greek that means to 'point' or 'indicate'. By this, deixis is concerned with the use of language that points to a particular ideology. Levinson's (1983: 54) definition of deixis is that it 'concerns the ways in which language encodes or grammaticalizes features of the context of utterance or speech event, and thus also concerns ways in which interpretation of utterances depends on the analysis of the context of utterance'. In the context of this paper, such language encapsulates the use of language categories like personal pronouns and expressions that are pragmalinguistic indicators of actions and behaviours that realise the valorisation, protection and conservation of the ecosystem.

Pronouns and expressions in discourse that mark ideologies are known as deictic elements/ indicators. Bang and Døør (ibid: 9) aver that 'deictical indicators are those features of the text which refer to the contextual, persons, objects, time, place and their logical connections'. By so doing, lexis and syntactic structures (sentences) that are considered explicit deixis are those that transmit deictical reference(s). In effect, analysis in the current work is conducted on discursive elements; the ecological relationships they reinforce within a context; and the ecocentric ideologies (environmental themes) encoded in them.

2. Methodology

Methodology can be considered the directory of every research piece; as it stipulates what the researcher does at every stage (phase) of their research endeavour. This research work was conducted in pursuance of Ebim's (2016: 5) prescription that 'a good, sound and logical research

output should be governed by a well-defined research methodology based on scientific principles': choices of type, source and collection of data; techniques of statistical analyses; and presentation of results. In a nutshell, this section is the tool-kit that spells out the data needed; tool of data collection; choice of source and selection of data; patterns of data analysis and the conclusions drawn.

The data comprised newspaper articles (in English expression) that evoke environmental protection, conservation and sustainability. It is worth emphasising that the population chosen for this research piece is not an entire newspaper, but suitable eco-reports and advertorials that idealise the environment. These nature discourses were published in and extracted from ten newspaper publishers: two bilingual newspapers (*Cameroon Tribune*; and *Cameroon Business Today*) and eight English Language newspapers (*Municipal Updates*; *The Sun*; *The Post Weekender*; *The Eden*; *The Star*; *The Median*; *Eco-Outlook*; and *The Green Reporter*), between the March 2019 and July 2020. Bearing in mind that time is not a factor sustained in this work, the data does not represent a synchronic or diachronic survey, but rather, simply an arbitrary selection that suits the objectives of this study. The corpus used is presented below.

Table 1: Newspapers Used

Newspaper Publisher	No of Publications Used	No. of Articles Used
<i>Cameroon Tribune</i>	05	06
<i>Cameroon Business Today</i>	02	03
<i>Municipal Updates</i>	02	02
<i>The Sun</i>	02	04
<i>The Post Weekender</i>	04	07
<i>The Eden</i>	02	04
<i>The Star</i>	03	05
<i>The Median</i>	02	03
<i>Eco-Outlook</i>	02	03
<i>The Green Reporter</i>	02	03
Total	26	40

The newspaper articles for this study were selected with recourse to the judgemental sampling technique. Each edition of the newspapers was included in the population of study based on the availability of an environmental-friendly article that is relevant to this study. The collection of the discourses and classification of the corpus was based on the judgement of the researcher.

Considering that this work focuses on the ecolinguistic analysis of discursive categories that activate ecological conservation (harmony) in Cameroonian newspaper discourses, the descriptive method (DSM) was adopted. Data analysis involved selecting suitable environmental newspaper articles; building a mini-corpus; classifying the articles; and identifying and interpreting deictic structures that are loaded with ecocentric meanings.

3. Results and Discussion

The pursuance of data analysis in this work was done on the premise of the hypothesis that Cameroonian newspaper reporters construct ecological saliency with recourse to productive, function-driven, deictic choices. In a bid to verify and sustain this hypothesis, analyses were directed towards identifying textual and contextual (pragmatic) entities which positively evoke nature in the Cameroon [English Language] newspaper. Saliency discourse discourses [re]produce and reinforce the virtues of existing flora, fauna, reptiles and biosphere (water, land and the atmosphere). Discussions are done as per two superordinate categories: formal and contextual. While the latter is pragmatic, the former is linguistic (structural).

3.1 Analysis of Formal Categories

The discursive patterns or forms under consideration in this segment were subjected to a typical lexico-semantic analysis. These forms constitute words that are categorically and/or functionally pronouns, nouns, adjectives (modifiers) and verbs. These formal entities [re]produce and reinforce varied ecocentric meanings, as presented and discussed below.

3.1.1 Pre-modifiers Highlighting Ecosystems

This refers to the use of nature-related adjectives in the selected texts. It was found that a prominent style that is adopted to evoke environmental saliency (ecocentrism) in the Cameroonian newspaper is the use of nature as pre-modifiers. These nature pre-modifiers or qualifiers are in the grammatical forms of nouns, adverbs, adjectives and noun phrases. A total of twenty-four (24) such pre-modifiers were found to attribute and valorise the ecosystem(s) that is indexed by the pre-modifier in varied ways. These eco-evoking and attributing pre-modifiers are presented as follows.

Table 2: Pre-modifiers Highlighting Ecosystems

Eco-modifier	Noun	Ecological Frame	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Forest chiefs of forest forest mangrove mangrove tree herbal plant</i>	Guards Posts conservation ecosystems project planting products ingredients	[Re]afforestation, conservation and valorisation of forest/plants	08	33.33
<i>Wildlife migratory waterbird Wildlife wildlife animal wildlife</i>	heritage [bill] species Centre Species Welfare protection	Wildlife and livestock protection and conservation	06	25
<i>Environmentally friendly sea Mount</i>	cooker water	Conservation of biosphere:	05	20.84

<i>climate</i> <i>climate change</i>	Cameroon Change mitigation	[high]lands, water and atmosphere		
<i>biodiversity</i> <i>wild</i> <i>biodiversity</i>	loss fauna and flora conservation	Biodiversity protection, conservation and valorisation	03	12.5
<i>whale</i> <i>whale</i>	Protection population	Conservation and veneration of water bodies and aquatic lives	02	08.33
Total			24	100

As seen in Table 2, the pre-modifiers that record preponderance are those that attribute and/or valorise the forest and plant species, having a frequency of 08, making 33.33%. The use of nature pre-modifiers in 'forest conservation' and 'tree planting' bring to consciousness the importance of the forest and accompanying plant and animal species that should be protected and preserved, and/or restored via [re]forestation. In essence, forest-indexing pre-modifiers advocate [re]forestation and/or forest protection and conservation.

Pre-modifiers drawn from wildlife and livestock rank second, having seven (06) occurrences, and rating 25%. Forms like 'wildlife heritage' and 'animal welfare', in fact, show how Cameroonian newspaper discourse is equally preoccupied with the valorisation, protection, and conservation of the country's wildlife and livestock.

Moreover, pre-modifying nouns, adjectives and adverbs originating from biosphere, that is [high]lands, water and atmosphere came third, with a distribution rate of 20.84% in 05 occurrences. This occurrence equally highlights the advocacy for the protection of [high]lands, water and atmosphere in environmental news in the Cameroonian newspaper. The use of 'Environmentally friendly cooker' and 'sea water', for instance, signals press consciousness and/or efforts to safeguard the biosphere from all forms of pollution.

Pre-modifiers indicating other ecosystems are scanty in the texts under study. Pre-modifying markers of biodiversity (BD) are less frequent with three (03), rating 12.5%, while those of aquatic species are the least with two (02), thus 08.33%. The existence of sparse usage reminiscent of BD conservation, and valorisation of water and aquatic bodies (in structures like 'biodiversity loss' and 'wale production/ population' respectively) does not mean indifference to the conservation of BD and aquatic species. Nonetheless, they are implicated already in the conservation of other ecosystems: biosphere, wildlife and livestock, and the forest.

3.1.2 Hedging

Hedging, thus, involves the use of modal verbs to express different meanings. Twenty-two (22) instances of hedging were identified in the texts, involving the use of five (05) categories of modals: can, could, will/shall, may/might and would. They are expressive of reporters' ideologies/beliefs about the virtues of nature, and human abilities that that realise ecological

conservation. The occurrences of these respective hedging markers and are tabulated below.

Table 3: Hedging Markers

Modal Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Can	07	31.82
Could	06	27.27
Will / Shall	03	13.64
Would	02	09.09
May/ Might	04	18.18
Total	22	100

Among the hedging instances identified, the use of ‘can’ was the most dominant, having a frequency of seven (07), thus, 31.82%. The dominance of ‘can’ expresses a duality of meanings, as in the examples that follow.

[1] *Proper e-waste management **can** help mitigate Global Warming* (*The Green Reporter*, No. 030 of

06/07/2020, p2)

[2] *We **can** also make simple changes, like using reusable bags and container* (*Cameroon Business Today*, No. 110 of 19-25/06/2019, p13)

[3] *The lycopene in tomatoes **can** even protect against sunburn* (*The Star*, Vol. 2, No. 592 of 13/07/2020, p6)

The use of ‘can’ in hedges [1] and [2] is suggestive of reporters’ preoccupation with the conscientisation of the Cameroon public about human abilities (behaviours, thought, innovations and activities) that are conserving to the ecosystem. As concerns utterance [3], the recurrent use of can in these journalistic discourses is aimed at celebrating the [nutritive and medicinal] abilities (virtues and potentials) of nature, notably plants, that should be protected and conserved. These potentials, in effect, point to the different actions carried out by plants to sustain terrestrial living.

Another prominent hedging marker is ‘could’, with a frequency of 06 (27.27%). It is used to state probabilities/possibilities about human activities and natural phenomena. This is illustrated in the following examples:

[4] *The bi-products of the fuel wood **could** be further used for cooking* (*Cameroon Business Today*, No. 110 of 19-25/06/2019, p25)

[5] *Incentives ... or other compensation **could** help those who incur significant cost as a result of whale protection* (*Eco-Outlook*, Vol. 1, No. 020 of October 2019, p6)

‘Could’, in effect, is used to emphasise the possibilities natural entities, most especially wood, have in realising sustainability. In addition, *could*, as in [5], is expressive of the probability of protection and conservation consciousness (drives) via concerted human efforts. ‘Can’ intimates the possibilities of protecting, restoring and conserving the ecosystem.

‘May/might’ is the third dominant hedger with rate of 18.18% in 04 occurrences. As rare as the frequency looks, *may/might* reveals the probable and/or imminent unsustainability of nature, which may result in the extinction of the human species, as exemplified below.

[6] *our local springs might soon dry off because of human activities (Eco-Outlook, Vol. 1, No. 020 of October 2019, p6)*

[7] *Degraded habitats may encourage more rapid revolutionary processes and diversification of diseases (Eco-Outlook, Vol. 1, No. 020 of October 2019, p6)*

As evoked in [6] above, *might* signals the precarious survival or existence of the natural environment (biosphere) as a repercussion of ecologically deleterious activities of human beings. Ecological consciousness (conservation) is further buttressed in [7] as the modal *may* is tactfully used to warn humanity against the advancement of plagues if the environment is not safeguarded.

Also identified in the environmental newspaper discourses is the marginal use of *will/shall* and *would*, with respective frequencies of 03 (13.64%) and 02 (09.09%). They state human actions that affect the environment in the future and, on the other hand, environmental actions that affect the future of human beings. From the foregone discussions, it is worth summarising that the Cameroonian press uses modals to showcase the potentials (abilities) of nature, and above all, reveal and advocate human actions (abilities) that advance ecological sustainability.

3.1.3 Headlines and Slogans

Twenty-three (23) headlines and slogans were equally identified in the corpus reproducing ecological saliency. Their use framed valorisation, protection and conservation of Cameroon's four (04) ecosystems: water, forestry, wildlife and biodiversity.

Table 4: Headlines and Slogans Framing Ecocentrism

Ecological Frame	Frequency	(%)
Biodiversity protection, conservation and valorisation	10	43.48
Conservation of biosphere (land, water and atmosphere)	07	30.43
[Re]afforestation, conservation and valorisation of forest/plants	06	26.09
Total	23	100

From Table 4 above, it can be observed that headlines and slogans advocating the protection and conservation of BD were the most prevalent, having a frequency 10 (43.48%). These headlines and slogans evoked care for and the virtues of BD that deserve conservation, as follows.

[8] *Limbe Wildlife Centre Establishes Special Care and Rehabilitation Section for Disabled Chimps (The Star, Vol. 2, No. 591 of 06/07/2020, p6)*

[9] *Cameroon: Africa's 4th Biodiversity Reserve Calls for Eco-citizenship (The Median, No. 394 of 06/07/2020, p4)*

[10] *Protecting Whales to Protect the Planet (Eco-Outlook, Vol. 1, No. 020 of October 2019, p6)*

[11] *Indigenous People Guard the 'the Lungs of the Planet' for All of Us (The Green Reporter, No. 029 of 22/06/2017, p11)*

The preponderance of biodiversity protection, conservation and valorisation headlines and/or slogans, thus, is suggestive of the profound fall in the biodiversity wealth of the country that needs urgent remedy. Forest conservation is activated by phrases '*Special Care and Rehabilitation Section*' and '*Africa's 4th Biodiversity Reserve*' in [8] and [9] respectively. Meanwhile, as concerns nature protection, it was framed with recourse to phrases like '*Protecting Whales to Protect the Planet*' and '*Guard the 'the Lungs of the Planet'*' in [10] and [11] respectively. This clarion call,

echoed by these headlines/ slogan, is a sharp pointer to the importance of BD to human survival.

To add, headlines/ slogans related to the protection and conservation of [high]lands, atmosphere and water bodies came second with frequency of seven (30.43%). These headlines/ slogans, in fact, admonish actions that aggravate degradation via pollution in the country's physical space, as in the instances that follow.

[12] *Multibillion Recycling Centre Opens in Yaounde* (Cameroon Tribune, No. 11810/8009 of 25/05/2019, pp11-12)

[13] *Environmental Protection: Nuclear safety Bill Explained* (Cameroon Tribune, No. 11871/8070 of 25/06/2019, p6)

[14] *Turning Waste Plastic into Didactic Materials* (Municipal Updates, Vol 3, No. 076 of 08/06/2020, p6)

As seen in the examples above, the respective use of *Recycling Centre Opens*; *Nuclear safety Bill Explained*; and *Turning Waste Plastic into Didactic Materials*, inter alia, reflect concrete actions the Cameroonian press has brought to the fore to inform the public of the social and legal standpoint of protecting the biophysical environment against pollution.

Moreover, headlines/ slogans highlighting forest conservation and valorisation rank third with a frequency of six (26.09%). Conscientisation about the importance, and therefore, conservation of Cameroon's forest stock is resonant in the examples that follow.

[15] *"Operation Green Sahel: Tree planting and Re-afforestation"*. (Cameroon Tribune, No. 11809/8007 of 22/03/2019, p14)

[16] *Gov't Inculcates Tree Planting Culture* (The Star, Vol. 2, No. 591 of 06/07/2020, p6)

[17] *"A tree for life: With our children let us plant it for the well-being of all"* (The Star, Vol. 2, No. 591 of 06/07/2020, p6)

In the respective instances above, constructs like *Tree planting and Re-afforestation*; *Tree Planting Culture*; and *let us plant*, among other, attest to actions recommended or taken by the government and private individual to protect, conserve and valorise Cameroon forests. Tacfully coined headlines/ slogans like those above are effective in galvanising actions and efforts that safeguard the biophysical environment. In all, the dominance of BD and forest conservation and valorisation frames, in effect, signals reporters' robust consciousness about the mutual dependence and interaction between the forest and biosphere to sustain human beings.

3.2 Analysis of Contextual Categories

The analysis of pragmatic categories takes into consideration textual properties that realised different meanings under different contexts. The interpretation of the meanings encoded in these pragmatic resources is driven by a conscious understanding of the intentions driving their use. The pragmatic tools to be analysed here include personification, metaphors, illocutionary speech acts and intertextuality.

3.2.1 Metaphors

Metaphors were identified from the cross-domain mappings they realise. In this regard, the

attributes of other entities are mapped into nature: marked by the transference of registers and features of other fields to nature. This transference is meant to idealise and valorise different entities of the country's ecosystem, as quantified below.

Table 5: Statistics of Metaphors Encoding Ecocentrism

Ecological Frame	Frequency	(%)
Conservation of biosphere (land, water and atmosphere)	17	58.62
[Re]forestation, conservation and valorisation of forests/plants	08	27.59
Wildlife and livestock protection and conservation	04	13.79
Total	29	100

In the stock of metaphors extracted from the corpus, majority (17) of them construct Cameroon's [high]lands, water and airspace. It was found that Cameroonian press journalists push for ecological consciousness by conceptualising nature using alien registers that are calibrated with different virtues. The idealising semantic sources and meanings of these tropes are analysed below.

[18] *Hele also mentioned the **fruitful support** ...to restore degraded land (Municipal Updates, Vol 3,*

No. 083 of 20/07/2020, p4)

[19]... *abusing it [nature] is synonymous to **digging a grave for ourselves and our unborn children***

(*The Post Weekender*, No. 02101 of 19/06/2020, p3)

[20] *"And the next 10 years present us with one of our greatest tests –a decade of **action to repair the***

earth" (*The Eden*, No. 1164 of 15/06/2020, p4)

[21] *He wanted **to build on his father's work on Climate Change** (*The Star*, Vol. 2, No. 567 of 15/01/2020, p3)*

[22] *The meeting ... came at a watershed moment **in the fight to save ... the planet** (*The Green Reporter*, No. 029 of 22/06/2017, p11)*

Two main ideologies are realised by the tropes above: firstly, the idealisation of concrete actions to redeem biosphere and, secondly, the projection of the deadly consequences of the deepening environmental depreciation/ devastation. To start with, 'fruitful support', 'action to repair the earth', 'to build on his father's work on Climate Change' and 'the fight to save ... the planet' in [18], [20], [21] and [22] respectively conceptualise and/or valorise efforts made and action taken to safeguard the country's [high]lands, water and airspace. While 'Fruitful support' in [19], for example, conceptualises nature protection as an act of nourishing nature for posterity, [20], [21] and [22] respectively construe drives to safeguard nature as one's dutiful effort to maintain a disfigured brittle object or a dysfunctional automobile; building a house for the future generation; and a war (fight) that warrants bravery, collaboration and alliance to be won. Nonetheless, 'digging a grave for ourselves and our unborn children' in [19], on its part, creates awareness about the life-threatening (devastating) consequences (on the present and future generations) of the prevalent indifference to nature protection. By the tropes 'repair' and 'save', the implication is that nature has incurred profound loss and damage already, and so, conservation drives should

be aimed at redeeming nature from extinction. The essence of these metaphors is to expose the devastating façade of the ecosystem, thus, activate its restoration and conservation.

Moreover, metaphorical categories vitalising Cameroon's forests and plant species are equally distributed in the corpus, with frequency of 8 (27.59 %). Metaphors in this category are instantiated in the utterances that follow.

[23] ... *lack of motorbikes ... was hampering **the fight against poaching** and illegal exploitation of forest products ... our firm will **to fight against destruction of biodiversity.***" (Cameroon Tribune, No. 11871/8070 of 25/06/2019, p21)

[24] ... *the Kom-Wum forest reserve ... **is abode to rare species chimpanzees and other apes*** (The Post Weekender, No. 02101 of 19/06/2020, p5)

[25] *Indigenous communities on the coast **harvest mangrove wood** ... for cooking* (Eco-Outlook, Vol. 1, No. 022 of January 2020, p2)

[26] ... *he reminded pupils that **planting trees is the most precious gift one can give humanity*** (Eco

Outlook, Vol. 1, No. 022 of January 2020, p2)

As seen in the respective utterances above, [23] frames forest protection as a compelling war (against an oppressor or invader); [24] idealises the forest as home for diverse animal species; [25] valorises plants as food that sustains humanity; and [26] activates [re]afforestation (tree planting) by projecting it as a virtuous act of expressing one's love to their community.

In all, the least occurring metaphors are those that champion the conservation and protection of wildlife and livestock, with a sparse occurrence of four (06.91%). These scanty metaphors were used to venerate concrete efforts geared at protecting and conserving the country's wildlife and livestock wealth, as exemplified below.

[27] ... *unsustainable wildlife trade **has fuelled the leap in animal-to-man disease*** (The Post Weekender, No. 02101 of 19/06/2020, p3)

[28] *He wanted to **build on ... his grandfather's work** on conservation and **his own work on illegal Wildlife Trade*** (The Post Weekender, No. 02107 of 10/07/2020, p6)

In [27] above, the construct '*has fuelled the leap in animal-to-man disease*' activates positive ecological meaning by pointing to the deleterious effects of animal exploitation. [28], on the other hand, wildlife and livestock conservation is framed a building a house (and work) demanding great skill and effort. In all, from the preceding discussions, it is ascertained that the Cameroonian press deploys metaphors in ecocentric discourses, firstly, to idealise eco-safeguarding efforts, secondly to valorise nature, and lastly, to paint a gruesome picture of the hazardous consequences of unsustainable nature exploitation; that imposes on the present and future generations.

3.2.2 Intertextuality

It was found that Cameroonian press reporters make allusions to other texts in their discourses. In the corpus, intertextuality was identified as references that reporters made to environmental laws; magazines and reports; and policy statements apropos of the protection and conservation of Cameroon's ecosystems: biosphere [(high)lands, water and airspace); forests and plant species; and wildlife and livestock. Information was imported from three extra-textual

sources, and in sixteen (16) occurrences. The sources of these evoked, imported texts weave profound ecological meanings in discourse. The sources of these ecological saliency-evoking texts are classified below.

Table 6: Sources of Ecocentric Extra-texts Used

Extra-textual Source	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Environmental Magazines/ Reports/ Mythology	12	75
Environmental Conventions/ Laws	03	18.75
Policy Statement	01	06.25
Total	16	100

The statistics in Table 6 reveals that majority allusions in the environmental news discourses under study were made to environmental magazines, journals, reports, periodicals and mythology. Having as frequency 12 (75%), the up-to-date information borne by these environmental extra-textual sources, thus, gives directives, credibility and justification for the actions and activities carried out by different environmental protection stakeholders to safeguard the country's ecosystems. The meanings evoked by these texts can be analysed in the examples that follow.

[29] **Literature about Lake Awing** ... reveals that the Awing people perform sacrifices in the lake Cameroon Tribune, No. 11845/8044 of 15/05/2019, p10)

[30] **They [researchers] say** all parts of the tree beginning from the fruit through the leaf is packed with medicinal virtues (Cameroon Business Today, No. 110 of 19-25/06/2019, p25)

[31] ... was largely due to **the medical profession which recommended bathing sea water for medical benefits** (The Sun, No. 0609 of 13/07/2020, p5)

[32] Quoting a report, **WWF notes that the environmental factors driving the emergence of zoonotic diseases** are "trade and consumption of high risk diversity wildlife ... deforestation ... animal production" (The Post Weekender, No. 02101 of 19/06/2020, p3)

[33] **As Yanomami Shaman Davi Kopenawa says in his recent book, The Falling Sky**, "There is only one sky and we must take care of it, for it comes sick, everything will come to an end" (The Green Reporter, No. 029 of 22/06/2017, p4)

The utterances above realise two main shades of meanings: valorisation and conscientisation. To start with, utterances [29], [30] and [31] respectively construct valorisation and veneration of different entities of the ecosystem: lakes (and other water bodies), trees (plant species) and sea water for sustaining humanity in unique ways. Lake Awing (like other lakes); for instance, is a deity that people conserve and worship as it provides their material and spiritual needs; trees (and other plant species) and sea water should be protected and conserved for they provide the health and/or medicinal needs of human beings. On the other hand, utterances [32] and [33] are concrete and factual (tenable) reasons that explain why wildlife exploitation and deforestation, on the one hand, and air pollution, on the other, jeopardise the sustainability of nature vis-à-vis the survival of present and future generations.

Cameroonian press reporters, as well, justify ecological stance by making scanty references to [inter]national environmental conventions and laws. With a timid occurrence rate of 03 (18.75%), the alluded texts (laws and convention) give a legal backing to nature protection, as in

the following examples:

[34] ... should be conserved for the benefit of the present and future generations in accordance with **the 1992 convention on biodiversity** (Cameroon Tribune, No. 11870/8069 of 24/06/2019, p9)

[35] The bill ... aims at remedying the shortcomings of **law No. 95/8 of 30/01/1995 on radiation protection** (Cameroon Tribune, No. 11871/8070 of 25/06/2019, p6)

The highlighted texts in [34] and [35] are evocative of legal instruments that regulate the exploitation of the biophysical environment. In effect, reference to [international laws and conventions on nature protection and conservation, thus, criminalise unsustainable exploitation of biodiversity and actions (activities), notably pollution, that erode the country's biosphere (land, water bodies and atmosphere).

From the above, policy statements relating to nature protection and conservation is the least imported text in the corpus, with just one (06.25 %) instance. This policy statement is given below.

[36] **According to a release from the British High Commission in Yaounde**, the multimillion "Earthshot Prize" is the most prestigious environmental prize in history (The Star, Vol. 2 No. 567 of 15/01/2020, p3)

The policy statement above, in fact, applauds and gives credibility to a pro-environmental action, notably an environmental prize. This lone instance gives a positive impression about the number of platforms and techniques used by reporters to activate ecocentric consciousness in the Cameroon audience.

4. Conclusion

In response to the hypothesis, it was corroborated that saliency discourses in the Cameroonian press are replete with deictic resources that activate environmentalism: valorisation, protection and conservation of the ecosystem. The use of environmentally friendly textual and contextual patterns was meant to conscientise the public about the nature. It was found that varied lexico-pragmatic forms (determiners, hedges, headline and slogan, metaphors, and intertextuality) were effective in persuading the public about the virtues of nature to humanity, thus, the importance of nature conservation.

The forty (40) constructive discourses analysed culminated in the identification of eight (03) formal and four (02) pragmatic resources that weaved ecological saliency. As concerns the formal fabric of the constructive discourses, the discursive tools deployed to realise ecological saliency include pre-modifiers, hedging, and headlines and slogans. It was found that the use of pre-modifiers [in the forms of nouns (phrases), adverbs, adjectives] evoked, idealise and valorise different entities of Cameroon's ecosystems (forest, biosphere, and wildlife and livestock). Hedging, notably with the significant use of 'can', 'could' and 'would' was aimed at creating awareness about the abilities and/or life-sustaining actions of nature. To add, the themes evoked

in the headlines unequivocally framed the protection, conservation and valorisation of Cameroon's ecosystems. With regard to the pragmatic categories, Cameroonian press reporters also constructed natural ideals with recourse to metaphor and intertextuality. Metaphors were prominent, as they were used to transmit positive ecological meanings. Fruit, house and construction metaphors were effective in qualifying ideal actions that heeded to calls for protection and conservation. Nonetheless, pejorative (death) metaphors were adopted to capture devastated environmental conditions, thus, to create awareness about the lethal dangers of environmental degradation and eventual extinction. Lastly, the use of extra-textual resources (environmental magazines/ reports/ mythology; environmental conventions/ laws; and official policy statements were meant to deify nature, and in the same direction, endow environmental advocacy with credibility and legality; as some environmental laws were cited to criminalise environmentally devastating activities, thus, creating awareness about the urgency and duty to safeguard and conserve the waning environment. In all, the ecological undertones of the deictic elements above are suggestive of commitment of the Cameroonian press to inform every Cameroon about the virtues of nature, and above engage them in environmental actions that aim to conserve and protect nature.

5. References

- Angwah, J. (2019). "Media Discourse and Communal Stances on Climate Change in Cameroon." *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 9 (14), 17-21. [doi: 10.7176/RHSS/9-14-03](https://doi.org/10.7176/RHSS/9-14-03).
- Bang, J. & Døør, J. (1993c). Eco-Linguistics: A Framework. In Jørgen Bang et al. (Eds). (1993d). *Ecolinguistics – Problems, Theories and Methods. The International Association of Applied Linguistics: Odense University*, 21-30.
- Blackmore, E. et Al. (2013). *Common Cause for Nature: Values and Frames in Conservation*. Machynlleth, Wales: Public Interest Research Centre.
- Bate, J. (1996). Living with the Wheater. In Jonathan Bate (Ed.). *Green Romanticism: Special Issue of Studies in Romanticism*, 35(3), 431-448.
- Cameron, D. (2012). *Verbal Hygiene. First Edition*. London: Routledge.
- Cowley, S. (2019). Eco-Civilisations: Voices in the Soundscape. *The Fourth International Conference on Ecolinguistics: Book of Abstracts*, 8-9.
- Ebim, M. (2016). An Ecolinguistic Study of Media Depictions of Oil Spillage in Ogoniland.

Language & Ecology. www.Ecoling.Net/Articles.

Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. London: Longman.

Fill, A. & Mühlhäusler, P. (2001). *The Ecolinguistics Reader: Language, Ecology, and Environment*. London: Continuum.

Fill, A. (2001). *Ecolinguistics: State of the Art 1998*. In Alwin Fill & Peter Mühlhäusler (Eds.). *The Ecolinguistics Reader: Language, Ecology and Environment*, 43-53. New York: Continuum.

Garner, M. (2005). Language Ecology as Linguistic Theory. *Kajian Linguistik dan Sastra*, 17(33), 91-101. <https://journals.ums.ac.id/index.php/KLS/article/view/4485>

Ghorbanpour, A. (2016). Ecolyrics in Pop Music: A Review of Two Nature Songs. *Language and Ecology*. www.ecoling.net/articles.

Hagege, C. (1985). *L'homme de paroles: Contribution Linguistique Aux Sciences Humaines*. Paris: Arthème Fayard.

Haugen, E. (1972). *The Ecology of Language*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Jørgensen, M. & Phillips, L. (Eds.). (2002). *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*. London: SAGE Publications.

Levinson, S. 1983. *Pragmatics*. Cambridge University Press.

Maffi, L. (2001). *Introduction*. In Louisa Maffi (Ed). *On Cultural Diversity: Linking Language, Knowledge and the Environment*, 1-50. Washington, D.C.: The Smithsonian Institute Press.

Maffi, L. et Al. (2001). *The World Languages in Crisis: Questions, Challenges, and a Call for Action*. Presented for Discussion with Participants at the 2nd International Conference on Endangered Languages of the Pacific Rim, Kyoto, Japan. 30th November–2nd December, 2001. In *Conference Handbook on Endangered Languages of the Pacific Rim*, 75-78. Osaka: Endangered Languages of the Pacific Rim Project.

Marciano, A. (2011). *The Discourse Behind an Environmental Campaign - Case Study: The Earth Hour*. Published M.A. Thesis, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

Nitsch, U. (2000). *The Art of Environmental Communication*. In Lars J. Lundgren (Ed.). *Environmental Protection*, 193-225. Stockholm: Swedish Environmental Protection Agency.

- Olayiwola, A. (2015). Mass Media of Communication and Environmental Problems: Islamic Religious Communication Solutions Perspectives. *J Mass Communicat Journalism*, 5(3), 1-7. [doi:10.4172/2165-7912.1000250](https://doi.org/10.4172/2165-7912.1000250).
- Priest, S. (2016). *Communicating Climate Change: The Path Forward*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rigby, K. (2007). *Ecocriticism*. In Julian Wolfrey (Ed.). *Introducing Criticism at the Twenty-first Century*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP.
- Steffensen, S. & Fill, A. (Eds.). (2014). Ecolinguistics: The State of the Art and Future Horizons. *Language Sciences*, 41, 6-25. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2013.08.003>
- Stibbe, A. (2012). Ecolinguistics and Globalization. In the Handbook of Language and Globalization. *John Wiley & Sons*, 143-418.
- _____. (2013). The Corporation as a Person and Psychopath: Multimodal Metaphor, Rhetoric and Resistance. *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis across Disciplines (CADAAD)*, 6(2), 114-136. <https://eprints.glos.ac.uk/681/>
- _____. (2015). *Ecolinguistics: Language, Ecology and the Stories We Live By*. London: Routledge.
- Tong, J. (2014). Environmental Risks in Newspaper Coverage: A Framing Analysis of Investigative Reports on Environmental Problems in 10 Chinese Newspapers. *Environmental Communication*, 8(3), 345-367.
- Ubanako, V. & Ekembe, E. (2014). Language and Ecology in Alobwed'Epie's *The Lady with a Beard*. *Research Journal of English Language and Literature (RJELAL)*, 3(4), 2395-2636.
- Van Dijk, T. (2015). *Critical Discourse Analysis*. In Deborah Tannen et al. (Eds). *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis: Second Edition*. Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.