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**Anthropocentrism in Water Governance: An Ecolinguistic Analysis of
Pakistan's National Climate Change Policy (2021)**



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Abstract

Pakistan is one of the most effected countries because of climate change-related issues. It leads to increased water scarcity in the country. Therefore, water management can be termed as the most important area of intervention in the climate policies of Pakistan. Despite of the fact that earlier studies focused on the management of water resources in Pakistan mainly dealing with technical issues related to water management in the country, very few efforts have been directed towards studying the role of the language used for the conception of water management in the climate policies of Pakistan. This has been dealt with in this study by the ecolinguistic approach that has been evaluated on the basis of the conceptual representation of the water resources management in the National Climate Change Policy 2021 of Pakistan on the basis of anthropocentrism.

On the one hand, drawing upon a set of ‘stories we live by’ developed by Arran Stibbe, and combined with knowledge developed through ‘Critical Discourse Analysis’—which is a qualitative method of text analysis—examples of policies are scrutinized concerning their water governance through this method. The major concepts of ecolinguistic studies are: ideological framing, erasure, and agency.

In the results, it may be seen that the main category relates to resource, security, and value. There is an emphasis on the technocratic and managerial worldview, alongside human development and security. Additionally, it may be seen that the non-human species and systems seem to be marginalized and disguised. Furthermore, the main actor is again the human system. The importance of the anthropocentric approach in management may be seen.

The result of the study verifies that though there is an acceptance of climate change as a concern in the policy, there is a limited climate vision in the language framework that hardly accommodates the view of the non-human. The importance of the theory of ecolinguistics has been made manifest in the study through the role of language in the policy of climate change, promoting the actual relevance of the theory to language evaluation in an environmental context in Pakistan.

Introduction

Climate change has developed into a notion characterized as one of the most challenging of the twenty-first century and has created a number of devastating consequences at the level of ecological and economic systems and at the level of our way of governing at a global level. Certainly, some of the most concerning consequences of climate change revolve around and incorporate aspects concerning the deterioration of issues revolving around water scarcity, and this is particularly true concerning countries in which the ecological and environmental systems developed are considered sensitive to climate change. Pakistan is considered to be at a high spot in terms of its water scarcity at both at a global level and concerning its ecological and environmental systems, as it includes a number of glaciers and is also blessed with its monsoon and Indus systems. The way the government manages its climate and water is not only important concerning its actual influence on certain decisions but also concerning certain aspects of imagining and constructing our way of thinking about issues revolving around these two concepts.

Problem Statement

Whereas it is true that previous studies on water scarcity in Pakistan have majorly focused on water resource simulation, water infrastructure development schemes, and policy effectiveness, surprisingly there is very little work done on water policy and actual use of language in policy discourses. Nevertheless, it is also true that language is not a static but a 'live' concept with actual potential to influence or make some effect in several varied ways. Further, as observed under ecolinguistic studies, it is also seen and understood thus: talking about or addressing and referring to water as 'resource,' 'threat,' 'good,' and 'life' is of critical concern with regard to 'how we are relating' to water and 'how' we are 'relating' it as a 'futurescape' concept.

Theoretical Orientation

It should be noted that this research is just an example of the wide approach named ecolinguistics; ecolinguistics is a new approach in linguistics that focuses on concepts like the use of languages to mediate ecological relations. After this, discourses should be assessed in terms of their use in ecological degradation or sustainability. Ecolinguistics, whose concentration is on concepts like 'the stories we live by,' proposed by researchers like Arran Stibbe, tries to explore what kind of ideologies lie behind some particular text that has an influence on the ways in which human beings interact with nature. These stories, sometimes even invisible in human society, may legitimize the use of the planet in ways like appropriation and exploitation, or even in ways characterized by interdependence. Among many types of stories through which human beings interact in the context of environmental concerns, narratives in environmental policy play an important role.

Focus and Scope of the Study

The current study explores water resources discourse in the context of climate change policies in Pakistan, with special emphasis on water scarcity and climate change resilience as linguistic constructs. Initial observations appear to confirm that water is principally construed in climate change policies as a resource to be managed and protected against increasing demands driven by rising global population and climate change threats. That view chimes with an increasing international trend to securitize and commodify water resources, characterizing water as a critical resource for ensuring stability and economic development in countries and states concerned with water sufficiency and security. However, the related climatic and water vocabularies may have implications for marginalizing water ecologies regarding the denial of inherent water values and silencing water-dependent nonhuman life.

Research Method and Analytical Focus

As a method of research in order to study these questions, this study employs the ecolinguistics proposed by Stibbe to carry out a close analysis of the ideological frame of policy discourse on water resources. Specifically in the data analysis part of this research study, three conceptual components of the ideological frame of policy discourse will be investigated: ideological frames of discourse themselves; erasure; as well as agency. Investigation on the ideological frames of policy discourse attempts to look into the conceptual ideas by which water resources will be defined within the policy: as an economic resource; as security; or as part of an ecosystem. Investigation on the element of erasure attempts to analyze to what extent non-human or non-human species of nature are erased from view in policy discourse on water resources.

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Investigation on the element of agency attempts to analyze in policy discourse who or what is acting within the policy: whether there is already any form of agency for water resources *prima facie*; or only as a subject of institutions acting in the policy.

Significance of the Study

By drawing the spotlight on the case of the climate change strategy of the Pakistani government, the current piece of research thus contributes to the increasing number of ecolinguistics studies that aim to debate the dominant discourses pertaining to the environmental condition of the Global South. It thus attempts to demonstrate how the environmental discourse within the borders of a nation-state reflects or abides by a particular view of the world as a whole, which is anthropocentric and technologically regulated to the extent that the need for development and security takes precedence over the planet itself. At the same time, however, it is hoped that it is possible to demonstrate the potential of ecolinguistics as a 'method' useful for critically discussing the relevant environmental administration texts in a wider sense, as a 'means' for detecting the potential constructions within the relevant environmental discourse.

Research Questions

In this paper, an effort will be made to critically think about the concept of anthropocentricity in the context of water resource governance discussed in the National Climate Change Policy in Pakistan from an ecolinguistic perspective. A series of research questions are presented to align with this objective:

How is water discursively formatted and commodified in the national climate change policy of Pakistan?

To what extent does the use of erasure within policy, as a means of marginalizing the needs of non-human species, feature within the water resource?

How is agency distributed between human and natural entities within the discourse of water governance in this policy?

How are anthropocentric presumptions embedded in this text through processes of ideological framing, erasure, and agency?

Purpose of the Study

In a similar way, the ultimate aim with which the following study has been carried out is to prove a point that the problem of scarcity of water and climate resilience is not just a technical problem but is simultaneously a linguistic problem as well. Thus, a linguistic study of the problem of climate & water in the case of a particular country like Pakistan may simultaneously prove useful not just with regard to linguistics but could possibly be applied to the environmental movement as well. The traditional discourse with regards to a policymaker is the extent to which the value of either human or environmental values is given due consideration with the problem and a number of potential solutions falling into place.

Literature Review

Ecolinguistics: Language, Ecology, and Environmental Meaning

Ecolinguistics signifies a field of interdisciplinary research that undertakes an investigation into the dynamic relationship between language and ecology/the environment, with particular emphasis on the role of language regarding how human

societies interact with nature. The pioneering research within the field, in the form of "Readings in Ecolinguistics," was the work of Fill and Mühlhäusler in 2001, which set the agenda for this subfield within the framework of "language and the destruction of the environment." In the context of the definition of language, the concept goes beyond the traditional notion of language as description to the extent that it has the power to shape realities within ecology.

The significant aspects of ecolinguistics have been provided by Arran Stibbe through the notion of 'stories we live by' (Stibbe, 2015). Essentially, this refers to cognitive-cultural dominant narratives that define the way in which society thinks in relation to the environment. Different analytical tools have been proposed by Stibbe in this context, such as ideology, erasure, or agency, through which analysis of discourse will be carried out on environmental impacts. The work has been significant in investigating any type of text that may have some connection to the environment, be it through advertisements, the media, or statements in text form (Stibbe, 2021).

Anthropocentrism in Environmental and Water Discourse

Anthropocentrism is a paradigm that considers human interests as the focal point of ethical and ecological concern. It does this in a way that considers nature as a Resource for Utilization by humans. Environmental scholars have argued for a long time that environmental problems emanate from the paradigm of anthropocentrism.

Anthropocentrism in water resources management can be related to representations or narratives where water has been subjected to economic, strategic, and development roles other than as a living system. In these narratives, human consumption, agriculture, and national development have been treated as more important compared to ecological sustainability and other non-human life. According to ecolinguistics, such narratives are referred to as destructive stories where human involvement with nature is hidden, and this is according to Stibbe 2015.

Critical Discourse Analysis and Environmental Policy

It should also be noted that Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides methodological approaches that can be utilized to explore the reproduction of relations of power, ideology, or dominance within institutions, as presented in Fairclough (1995). It should also be noted that CDA has also focused significantly on exploring language use, whether it is environmental or climatic policy, to establish how language constitutes the definition of the problem or justifies the solutions that one favors, as presented in Wodak and Meyer (2009).

It has shown that it favors abstraction, nominalization, and passive voice constructions, which minimize any culpability for environmental degradation and instead focus interest in administrative solutions (Fairclough, 2003). It has been determined to be a very effective method in searching for power relations in association with texts but has been seen to not have specific ecological criteria for assessing (Fairclough, 2003). Ecolinguistics has solved this problem while applying the principles of looking at texts through CA/D with attention to ecological effects and moral characteristics (Stibbe, 2015).

Erasure and Agency in Environmental Discourse

Erasure is one of the important conceptual tools in the analysis of this phenomenon of

linguistically motivated disappearance of natural world elements. According to Stibbe, the different ways through which the ecological objects are erased include the void erasure, trace erasure, and the process of backgrounding that positions ecological objects second to human ones. This disappearance process hides ecological reality.

Analysis of agency is concerned with how grammatical structures indicate the allocation of agency or responsibility. Starting from work on environmental discourses, a number of studies have shown that environmental discourses consistently allocate agency to human agency while presenting nature as passive and controllable (Goatly 2000). This normalizes and supports anthropocentric power relationships which position ecosystems as an object to be managed rather than as agent in ecosystems.

Water Governance, Climate Change, and Securitization

One strand of international scholarship on water governance has criticised the growing trend of framing water scarcity within the discourse of security, in particular for areas sensitive to climate change (Allan, 2003). Securitization of water resources has led towards associating water scarcity with higher infrastructure development and building of dams.

Meanwhile, climate change discourses add to these developments by underlining water both as a risk and as a strategic resource for nation-building. Even as those discursive practices articulate water in terms of adaptation, enhanced resilience, and sustainability, others would suggest that in this way, discourses reflect, instead, a statist, anthropocentric paradigm for water governance-primarily concerned with reproducing nation-state systems rather than ecological sustainability or local knowledge. From an ecolinguistics perspective, the water security paradigm limits the environmental imagination.

2.6 Environmental and Climate Discourse in Pakistan

However, the study of climate change in Pakistan has only focused on vulnerability studies and adaptation strategies and governance (Khan et al. 2020). The governance of water resources in Pakistan is based on its dependence on the Indus River and glaciers/moist rainfall (Rasul and Sharma 2016).

Nevertheless, there is insufficient study conducted regarding environmental policies in the Pakistani language. In previous studies concerning environmental policies in Pakistan, no scholar has ever examined the representation of 'nature,' 'water,' and 'human beings/environment' from a policy language point of view. Wherever there was a need to perform a discourse study in any policy or policy aspect in Pakistan, it has been observed that its results also agree with "the emphasis on 'development,' 'national security,' and 'economic growth' to the exclusion of 'ecological' interests" (Rasul, 2014).

Research Gap and Contribution of the Present Study

It has been observed that despite the increase in studies at an international level on various topics in the domain of ecolinguistics, there has been an apparent hiatus in researching matters pertaining to anthropocentrism and its use in relation to water resources in the context of Pakistan from an ecolinguistic viewpoint. It has also been observed that there is an apparent lack of investigation in the literature pertaining to linguistic practices on issues such as country-level climate change policies that do not take into consideration non-human entities.

The objective of this research will be to close that gap through a study of the Pakistani

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National Climate Change Policy document with respect to its aspects of ideological framing, erasure, and agency through the paradigm provided by the study of ecolinguistics by Arran Stibbe.

Theoretical Frameworks

Introduction to the Theoretical Framework

The major reason behind this study will thus come from ecolinguistics, a conceptual study that involves a specific form of inter-disciplinarity in which language, as well as human associations in a natural environment, incorporates a lens of analysis as well as critique. Moreover, while observing language structures, in a manner relevant to a contextual form of policies that are environmentally governed, language in an ecosystem will also incorporate a form of evaluation based upon a specific set of ecological repercussions (Fill, Mühlhäusler, 2001).

The current study will be drawing on the general theoretical model of ecolinguistics as postulated by Stibbe, namely the stories that human beings 'live by,' as the main guide. Some other specific conceptual tools created by Critical Discourse Theory will be utilized with a view to engaging with the power and ideology-related issues in the policies. These will be utilized as tools of critical evaluation of anthropocentric ideologies.

Ecolinguistics as a Theoretical Orientation

Ecolinguistics was formulated as an antidote to the growing concern that linguistic practices are contributing to environmental deterioration by reinforcing an exploitative relationship between humans and the environment (Fill and Mühlhäusler, 2001). Unlike the views of linguistic practices as being non-normative in ecologies, the study acknowledges the force of language in shaping environmental values.

Specifically addressing the topic of ecolinguistics, environmental crises encompass issues "which not only have a material/technical dimension as described above—following the line of argument of linguo-centric approaches to environment— but also have a discursive and ideological dimension as outlined above" (Stibbe, 2015). This means that at this stage of its development and following this particular line of argumentation, there is a specific part played by language in defining what these crises are and what sorts of solutions are called for, as well as a possible starting point in terms of exploring policy texts and their analysis using this particular approach in which language plays a major part with regard to policy and rules of decision-making.

Arran Stibbe's "Stories We Live By"

Stibbe describes cognitive-cultural stories that form part of a discourse as 'stories we live by.' He provides various categories relevant for analyzing a narrative relevant for this study, viz., 'ideology, erasure, and agency.' 'Stories we live by' are those that shape a culture's view of the world and human responses to that view of the world.

Ideology:

The term 'ideology' in ecolinguistics has been defined as:

'Ideology: The unarticulated presupposition or values accompanying a type of language that shapes our conception of nature.' (Stibbe, 2015)

With respect to anthropocentric ideologies, 'human' is portrayed in the following manner: 'human' is seen as outside of, rather than inside, 'nature,' while some

environmental entities are represented as ‘resources’ or ‘commodities.’ The analysis of ideologic framing in policy discourses helps to elucidate who ‘water’ is being represented ‘for.’

Erasure

Erasure is the linguistic marginalization or elimination of the elements within the natural world. “There are three kinds of erasure: void erasure, trace erasure, and backgrounding.” Erasure is the process that makes the natural world invisible. Erasure analysis is highly applicable in the study of the marginalization of non-human species and natural world ecosystems within the discourse of water governance.

Agency

Agency analysis looks at the conferment or denial of the ability to act in the discourse. With regard to environmental discourses, the ability to act continues to be conferred to humans through institutions, but the environment itself continues to be depicted or constructed either as passive or as an inanimate object. In relation to this, the linguistic concepts of transitivity, passivization, and nominalization are used to examine the depiction of the environment vis-à-vis the humans through the policy.

Anthropocentrism and Ecological Worldviews

Anthropocentrism is one of the pivotal ideas used in the context of environmental humanities and ecolinguistics. This refers to the paradigm or a worldview through which human requirements are regarded as being more major as compared to other entities or objects (Merchant, 1980). This particular worldview has been extensively used along with other ideas in the context of modern governance. These ideas have been utilized in various forms in modern policies, incorporating ideas regarding human growth, management or security.

Ecolinguistics provides methods by which to scrutinize and critically assess anthropocentric discourse, taking into consideration and exploring how discourse fosters ecological care and dependence or how it justifies and supports natural domination and exploitation (Plumwood, 2002; Stibbe, 2015). This research will apply those methods in order to find out how anthropocentrism is used within water governance discourse in Pakistan.

Integration with Critical Discourse Analysis

Although the paradigm of particular interest is that of Ecolinguistics, CDA will be used to analyze issues concerning issues of power and institutionalized power in the policy documents. This is a paradigm that seeks to analyze how social power and domination are created through discourse (Fairclough, 1995). Environmental policies become a subject of interest for this particular analysis since environmental policy is a reflection of the interest of dominant governmental institutions.

By amalgamating CDA and Ecolinguistics in the area of study, one

The emphasis of CDA on power, ideology, and institutional discourse

Ecolinguistics’s ecological and ethical assessment of language

It also offers an effective approach to analyze the term, anthropocentrism, within water management discussion.

Relevance of the Framework to the Present Study

The ecolinguistic approach that the researcher intends to employ for the conduct of the study is best used within the framework of the National Policy on Climate Change in Pakistan because the approach provides an opportunity for the researcher to critically evaluate the representation, management, and attitude towards the use of water through the instrument of language. Moreover, the perception, exclusion, and agency of ecolinguistics offer an affordably conducted study on the questions being probed by the researcher of the anthropocentric beliefs encapsulated in the climate policies.

Summary

In the same respect, the theoretical background for the research study has been discussed in this chapter by taking the ecolinguistics approach and Critical Discourse Analysis. The conceptual tool for analysis on the discussion of the “stories that we live by” has been taken on the basis of the contributions made by Arran Stibbe so that the purpose of the analysis is being met for the study under consideration and an analysis of the construction of the anthropocentric construct based on the National Climate Change Policy in Pakistan can be evaluated.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The present research is based on a qualitative and interpretive research approach. This is because, given that this research does not attempt to measure or quantify water scarcity or policy interventions in any way, this qualitative approach is suitable for this research. In this case, because this research aims to explore and understand some of the underlying ideologies and assumptions of policy discourse on water and those related to anthropocentric perspectives, this qualitative discourse analysis is suitable. This is because this qualitative discourse analysis is capable of exploring and understanding these issues on how language constructs and shapes meaning.

Nature of Study

The nature of this research can be deemed descriptive and analytical. It does not intend to test hypotheses or propose policy interventions but rather to ascertain a descriptive and interpretive view of how the topic of water comes to be represented within the overall context of the policy discussion around climate change. It should be acknowledged that, as a text-based form of research, it entails a close reading and interpreting approach to policy text. However, as an ecolinguistic approach, the research seeks an assessment of the ecological implications of the discourse from an official policy context.

Data Source

The significant data of the research includes the National Climate Change Policy of Pakistan 2021. The policy document has been selected because it reflects the official standpoint of the Pakistani state in relation to climate change adaptation, mitigation, and resource governance. In the perspective of this country's vulnerability to climate-induced water stress, the policy is a pertinent and authoritative site for exploring how language conceptualizes, frames, and governs water resources. Only sections of the policy that address water resources, water scarcity, climate resilience, and governance explicitly and implicitly have been analyzed.

Analytical Framework

The core analytic perspective for the study is based on the ecolinguistic framework of Arran Stibbe, and particularly on his notion of "stories we live by." This enables the identification and evaluation of discourses in terms of their ecological consequences. Therefore, selected tools from CDA are merged in order to reinforce the analysis in terms of power relations and institutional discourse. By bringing ecolinguistics and CDA into one frame, this study will be able to examine not only how language represents anthropocentric ideologies but also how those ideologies are reproduced and legitimized within the official policy discourse.

Analytic Categories

This study is organized based on three major categories that Stibbe (2015) has identified. These are in line with the research questions of this study.

Ideological Framing

"Ideological framing" basically deals with the beliefs and value structure that frame the discussion of representation of water in the policy document. This concept centers on whether the representation of water in the policy document is regarded as an instrument for development, security, either at the national level and personal level, or simply the natural environment. Main attention is directed to anthropocentric ideologies.

Erasure

The process of erasure has been used to examine the extent to which non-human entities, ecosystems, or specific ecological relations are marginalized in discourse. The discussion has been centered on types of void erasure, trace erasure, or background erasure in order to examine the ways in which dependent forms of non-human life or ecological entities may be rendered invisible in the policy discourse. It is worth mentioning that this particular concept is extremely significant in understanding the ways in which ecological agendas may be marginalized in support of human-centric agendas.

Agency

Such kinds of analysis are concerned with aspects of distribution of action and agency in the discourse. Scrutinizing grammatical features such as transitivity, passivization, and nominalization occupies a vital position with regard to aspects of action and agency distribution and assignment to human institutions and agents as opposed to aspects of nature and action and agency distribution with respect to entities of nature like rivers and water bodies with a passive voice.

Procedure of Data Analysis

Analysis of the data is done in a systemic and recursive way. Firstly, the areas discussed in the policy paper are sought out in line with their relevance to the consideration of the theme of water resource management in relation to issues of climate change. Secondly, the sought text in the paper is analyzed in order to identify the usage of certain words in line with the metaphors, grammatical arrangements, and theming. Finally, analysis of the sought text will take into consideration the analysis of the aforementioned features within the purview of three different categories: ideological, erasure, and

agency.

Ethical Considerations

Being fully reliant on publicly available information regarding policy documents, it does not involve human subjects, and therefore the issues regarding consent and privacy do not apply. It does adhere to ethical issues by appropriately portraying the policy document and avoiding any form of misconception by interpretation and/or quotes. It still retains the element of being critical and objective in nature even though it is an academic-based piece.

Delimitations of the Study

Though the selected literature is narrowed to just one policy literature, i.e., of National Climate Change Policy of Pakistan, done in the year 2021, yet it doesn't include comparisons with the policies of other countries and around the world, nor is implementation and the outcomes of the interested policies examined. The analysis of the selected literature is entirely focused on the linguistic creation of water governance discourse and is presented merely as a reason of its exploratory and qualitative nature.

Analysis and Discussion

Introduction

This chapter will examine a set of selected quotes from Pakistan's National Climate Change Policy (2021) regarding water resources through the lens of ecolinguistics and specifically using "stories we live by" provided by Arran Stibbe. This will enable a discussion to be conducted using selected quotes from this policy to explore how assumptions are made in this policy regarding water resources from a more anthropocentric view.

Ideological Framing of Water in the Policy Discourse

Water as a Resource Under Threat

The policy again and again mentions how water is a fragile resource endangered by climate change, as well as human demands. This can be seen in the following quote: "The Water Policy outlines a framework for interventions by the federal and provincial governments to address various issues driving from the declining supply and deteriorating quality of water, threatening the prosperity and health of a rapidly growing population."

In this context, water is discursively constructed as a utility resource, and its relevance is measured solely with respect to its contribution towards "prosperity and health" of humanity. The ecological relevance of water, irrespective of its utility contribution to humanity, is not being recognized here. This can be understood with respect to an anthro- ideological position that recognizes environmental concerns only when related to human welfare.

Securitization and Development-Oriented Framing

It is here that the securitized framing of water becomes even more overt in the discussion of future climate projections:

"This will further exacerbate the already difficult situation of a water-stressed country facing demand increases due to population growth and increasing economic activity."

The term "water-stressed country" sets the frame for water scarcity within a national

risk narrative. The use of population growth and economic activity as causal factors reinforces a developmentalist ideology in which water scarcity is framed as an inhibition to economic perpetuation rather than an ecological imbalance. This framing is consistent with the global water security discourse, wherein state stability is privileged over ecosystem sustainability.

Technocratic and Managerial Ideology

There is a strong technocratic orientation in the policy's long list of solutions based on infrastructure:

“Assess and address the needs for additional water storage and distribution infrastructure.”

“Identify new potential dam sites to keep the option open to develop new dams, should they be needed.”

These extracts frame water shortage as a technical issue in need of infrastructural regulation. With a focus on dams, storage, and distribution, a managerial world view is encouraged wherein human design is presented as the key intervention. According to an ecolinguistic understanding, this kind of discourse involves actantial support for the control-based frame in the relationship with nature, where ecological processes are subordinated to human planning and intervention.

Erasure of Non-Human and Ecological Dimensions

Void Erasure of Non-Human Life

Despite the widespread scrutiny of water systems, there is a conspicuous lack of direct mentions of non-human species that rely on these systems. For instance:

“Fresh water resources in Pakistan are based on snow and glacier-melt and monsoon rains, both highly sensitive to climate change.”

Glaciers and monsoon systems are cited but are considered as physical elements of human water resource systems rather than as part of living ecosystems. The absence of aquatic life, river diversity, and ecological interdependence is complete. Void erasure takes place here where life forms are made invisible in discourse.

Backgrounding Of Ecology

In other cases, the ecological issues may be raised but will be secondary to other concerns, and in

“Protect and preserve water catchment areas and reservoirs against degradation, silting and irrigation system contamination.”

In the current matter, the protection of the ecology is rationalized from a functional perspective, which is the avoidance of degradation and contamination in order to maintain the availability of the water. The obvious intrinsic value of the catchment area is pushed aside, the implication being that the protection of the ecology is necessary only within the context of human water management.

Agency in Water Governance Discourse

Institutional and Human Agency

Agency within the policy discourse is, thus, overwhelmingly assigned to state institutions by means of repeated modal constructions:

“The Government of Pakistan... shall take the following measures.”

“Ensure water conservation at all levels.”

“Develop necessary infrastructure.”

The consistent use of imperative verbs—ensures, develops, enforces, and assess—thereby situates the state as the dominant actor. This is a linguistic pattern to consolidate a governance-centric worldview in which environmental action is monopolized by institutional authority.

Passivization of Water and Natural Systems

By contrast, water itself is grammatically positioned as passive:

“Water resources are inextricably linked with climate.”

“Water is stored, allocated, conserved and exploited.”

Water is cast as an object of action rather than as an actor with the capacity to act or respond. The deployment of such passivization denies agency to natural systems and facilitates an anthropocentric hierarchy of humans controlling and managing nature.

Anthropocentrism in Policy Discourse

The cumulative impact of ideological framing, erasure, and agency allocation provides a predominantly anthropocentric storyline. Though there may be ecological discourse, it will be contained in humanistic-driven goals such as:

“Enhance water security.”

“Safeguard Pakistan’s rights on trans-boundary water inflows.”

Such approaches emphasize national involvement, legal rights, and human security, further entrenching the idea that water is essentially a resource meant to satisfy human and state needs.

Discussion in Relation to Research Questions

The analysis shows that:

Water is discursively constructed as a commodified resource and security value.

The non-human species and ecologies are erased or relegated.

Agencies are only applicable to human institutions and not water.

Anthropocentric ideas can be infused into the lexicon through lexicalization, grammar, or topicization.

These results are specific to the research questions posed in the study and also support the use of the ecolinguistic framework offered by Stibbe.

Summary

This chapter has established that Pakistan’s National Climate Change Policy maintains an anthropocentric, securitized, and technocratic discourse in governing water resources. Through an anthropocentric agenda embedded in discourse, this chapter identifies that this discourse restricts and sidelines ecologic perception in relation to water resources and highlights a linguist interpretation in relation to a different discourse in perceiving water resources as a living system instead of a resource.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The particular research study is seeking to find out how the discourse in water resource management in “National Climate Change Policy 2021” can be studied under the theory of ‘Ecolinguistics’ and in particular its association with anthropocentrism in its linguistic content. This has its grounding in theory through what has come to be referred to as the ‘stories we live by’ theory through a philosopher and environmental discourse

study writer, Arran Stibbe. Also, CD theory.

Analysis of these representations has pointed out that the predominant representations of water revolve around water as a resource in peril, water as a security issue, and water as a component of human development and security. This representation captures a construct of a "technocratic and management-oriented character of the issues of the environment, which sees issues of the environment as a problem to be worked on by providing solutions based on infrastructure and control systems, and sees human needs, development, and security in a better light than the aspect of interdependence with the environment."

Moreover, through this analysis, it is also revealed as to how these non-human species and environment are completely effaced and subordinated within this discourse of this policy. Though this is a discussion of river systems, glaciers, and catchment areas, it is done functionally in terms of water and its efficient function and work as part of this system. The natural and intrinsic function of water and this environment with regard to its sustenance of non-human species remains effaced.

Further examination of agency within this passage shows that there is overwhelming attribution of agency and action to human agencies such as states, while water is rendered inferior and controllable. This imbalanced attribute is necessary to sustain the human-nature dichotomy and impose human interventionist policies.

Overall, the results were able to prove the presence of anthropocentric orientation within the discourse of the climate and water policy in Pakistan. As a whole, the linguistic treatment of the latter, despite recognizing the risks of climate change and promoting the idea of sustainability within its framework, still reflects a preference for anthropocentric narratives within the developments influenced by the instrumentality of the latter.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

Incorporating Ecological Worldviews in Policy Language

The terms used in environmental policies should transcend the strictly anthropic paradigm, understanding water not as one more resource to be governed, but as a living ecological system. The debate on environmental policy needs to be more relevant for the needs of human development while reaffirming ecosystem integrity.

Reduction of Erasure to Non-human Entities

In future climate policies, it is necessary to involve aquatic ecosystems, biodiversity, or non-human species dependent on water bodies. Non-human life should be visible in the language used within climate policy. Meeting such a goal may support more inclusive climate policy.

Rebalancing Agency between Humans and Nature

Policy discourse needs to be deprived of the persistent feature of referring to water and ecosystems as passive substances that should be controlled. On the other hand, discourse strategies that recognize and incorporate natural processes into language may, in effect, play an effective role in fostering sustainable discourse and challenging human/nature relations based on domination.

Integrating Ecolinguistic Awareness in Policy Formulation

It would be very helpful to increase awareness of the ideological impact of language use through training in ecolinguistic awareness for policymakers, planning professionals, and environmental institutions alike. It would also help in ensuring that the language of sustainability policy is not used in a way that reproduces anti-environmental discourses.

Linguistic and Ecological Implications

This paper has demonstrated how ecolinguistics can be applied to the examination of environmental policy in Pakistan. Future research might further this approach by applying it to other policy documents, comparative national contexts, or multilingual contexts as a means of continuing to explore the ways in which language shapes environmental governance and ecological values.

Limitations of the Study

This paper focuses on a single policy document and only discusses water-related discourse within the National Climate Change Policy (2021). It does not trace the policy into implementation, public reception, and the material effects of governance practices. The present analysis also remains within the English-language policy text, which might reflect only partially how specific environmental narratives are constructed in local or regional languages.

Recommendations for Future Research

These might be extended by more comparative methods, such as an analysis of different points in time or different national varieties of a certain climate or water policy. Analysis may concentrate on the translation of the policy discourse into regional languages and environmental consequences. It may also bring more value to the analysis by incorporating ethnographic methods in order to understand the importance of policy language in comparatively contributing to community environmental attitudes and beliefs.

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