

**Raising Sustainability Awareness through Positive
Discourse: An Ecolinguistic Study of Selected Children's
Stories by Ruskin Bond**

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ABSTRACT:

Ecology and its sustainability are the major concern of the 21st century. Ecolinguistics, which combines the field of ecology with that of linguistics is the focus of the current paper. The study utilises Halliday's (2014) transitivity system for the analysis of children's stories from an ecolinguistics perspective. By investigating its core components: Participant (PR), process (Pro) and circumstance (CR) from an ecological perspective, the study aims to identify the frames, created by linguistic features, that Bond draws upon to shape children's perspective about environmental concerns. The study relies on Positive Discourse Analysis (PDA) to analyse children's discourse concerned with nature from an ecolinguistic perspective and to identify Bond's ecosophy.

Keywords: Positive discourse analysis, ecolinguistics, sustainability, children's literature, Transitivity system, framing.

المستخلص:

تعتبر البيئة واستدامتها الشغل الشاغل للقرن الحادي والعشرين. علم اللغة الإيكولوجي ، الذي يجمع بين مجال علم البيئة مع مجال علم اللغة هو محور البحث الحالي. تستخدم الدراسة نظام Halliday Transitivity (2014) لتحليل قصص الأطفال من منظور علم اللغة الإيكولوجي. من خلال التحقيق في مكوناتها الأساسية: المشاركين (PR) والعملية (Pro) والظرف (CR) من منظور بيئي تهدف الدراسة إلى تحديد الأطر، التي تم إنشاؤها بواسطة الميزات اللغوية ، التي يعتمد عليها الكاتب "بوند" لتشكيل منظور الأطفال حول الاهتمامات البيئية. تعتمد الدراسة على تحليل الخطاب الإيجابي (PDA) لتحليل خطاب الأطفال المعني بالطبيعة من منظور لغوي بيئي ولتحديد فلسفة "بوند" البيئية.

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1. Introduction:

Contrary to the discourse of consumerism and advertising that promotes for unnecessary consumption, Stibbe (2018:179) endorses researching into positive discourses, as they form a huge gap in the body of literature critiquing the abuse of nature. Discourses, as he suggests "which can inspire people to find well-being in ways that do not require over-consumption and treat the natural world with respect and care." The current research attempts to fill this gap by investigating patterns of language use when talking about nature in children's literature. How participants, process types and circumstance, of the transitivity system, aid in protecting or destroying the ecosystem. "Great stories for children" is a collection of 19 short stories, published in 2011 by the Indian writer Ruskin Bond. Bond is a multi-talented writer who contributed to the field of literature with several novels, poetry, essays, and short stories. He has been granted several awards, among which are: John Llewellyn Rhys Memorial prize in 1957, the Sahitya Akademi award in 1993 for English writing in India and the Padma Shri in 1999. Many of his short stories have been made into famous films.

The resurgence in writing about nature aims at preserving the eco-system especially at a time when the natural world is so obviously under threat. According to Macfarlane (2013)

literature possesses certain special abilities, very different to those of science. It can convey us into the minds of other people, and even — speculatively — the minds of other species ... (it can) make us feel things— fear, loss and damage, certainly, but also hope, beauty and wonder. And these last are, I think, the most important emotions in terms of our environmental future... We will not save what we do not love.

These stories were deliberately chosen due to their positive representation of nature and its integration with humans, in a sense that they become

one. Paşcalău et al. (2021:163) assert that “different relationships between man and nature in different cultures, represented in language, give rise to different approaches to the management of the environment and human activities.”

Bond’s stories present a worldview that cherishes the local and the natural life of the countryside over the artificial, contemporary life of the cities. A worldview that respects the seed and treats it with precaution to preserve it as a symbol of sustaining (non)-human existence. Twelve of the nineteen stories investigated include reference to a natural element in their titles. Bond’s target is to convey to children that nature is a great source of joy and pleasure. Stibbe (2015:1) asserts that “nature writing can inspire respect for the natural world.”

The study attempts to investigate the linguistic clusters that Bond uses to influence children’s attention to ecological matters. How language system shapes the children’s viewpoint on issues related to ecology. It thus focuses on the linguistic choices that are selected to achieve this aim.

Children are empty vessels when filled with proper information, they will be able to act rationally. Nerlich (2010: 6) argues that “children as actors and their ‘pester power’ have been identified as key to initiating attitudinal and behavioural change in the UK.” Through narratives associated with nature, Bond builds up suitable system of frames in children’s minds. He aims at promoting for the frame that contributes to the support and protection of non-human as well as human lives. To build these frames, Bond attempted to use simple language and to appeal to emotions. These frames are repeated over and over in his stories to establish the required awareness. According to Lackoff’s (2010: 73) frames refer to the conceptual systems in the brain, “such frame systems have to be built up over a period of time.” Thus, by building these frames in children’s minds through stories, writers attempt to establish the required awareness to the environment and its preservation. Awareness comes as a second stage after story telling in a series of stages specified by Nicolas (2016: 226), which is then followed by engagement, stronger movement to reach the final stage, which is social change. By raising environmental awareness, the ecological experience is indirectly framed in children’s minds, affecting their cognition, which in turn aids young readers to construct protection acts and concern for environmental issues. Lackoff (2010:74) believes that “frames are communicated via language and visual imagery.”

Ecological children’s discourse does not only refer to discourse about nature, but being placed in literary works, it encompasses cultural

ecology as well. The frames provided by Bond in his stories are not new to his audience. They go hand in hand with the frames already existing in the Indian children's brain circuits and acquired from the Indian culture and tradition. "According to Hindu scriptures all lives have the same right to existence. Human beings have no dominion over other creatures. They are forbidden to exploit nature; instead, they are advised to seek peace and live in harmony with nature." (Chakraborty et al. 2022: 1704)

1.1 Ecolinguistics:

Ecolinguistics is one of the latest approaches in linguistics that came into existence since the publication of Stibbe (2015) *Ecolinguistics: Language, Ecology, and the Stories We Live By* and later updated in its second edition in 2021. Its primary focus is on the relationship between language and cultural environment. Stibbe believes (2015:6) that there is a connection between the "stories-we-live-by" and the way we think and interact in the world. Stories according to Stibbe do not simply refer to the narrative sense of the word but to "the mental models shared across a culture or community of people that govern their perceptions of everyday realities."

Ecolinguistics mainly focused on criticizing the dominant discourses of the industrial civilization, and how these discourses indirectly promote for the destruction of the ecology through their repeated calls for consumerism and economic growth. Stibbe (2018: 165) argues that "The next step is to search for new discourses to base society on; for example, discourses which promote being more rather than having more, well-being rather than growth and respecting rather than conquering nature... positive new discourses to live by"

Two prevailing approaches to ecolinguistics are the "Huguenian approach," which studies "language ecology" mainly the effect of the environment on language, and the "Hallidayan approach" referred to as "ecological linguistics," which focuses on the effect of language on the environment: namely "the unecological property of the lexico-grammar in the English language system". Both approaches utilize critical discourse analysis and positive discourse analysis to analyse environmental discourse from an ecolinguistic perspective. The current study adopts Halliday's systemic functional linguistics as an analytical tool to analyse children's ecological discourse from an ecolinguistic perspective. It investigates the ways Ruskin Bond epitomizes the eco-beneficial aspect of the environment in his writings in an attempt to raise children's

ecological awareness and promote for harmony and co-existence for the sustainability of the ecosystem.

Alexander and Stibbe (2014: 105) define ecolinguistics as “the study of the impact of language on the life-sustaining relationships among humans, other organisms and the physical environment. It is normatively orientated towards preserving relationships which sustain life.” In his 2021 edition, Stibbe redefines ecolinguistics as “the study of the role of language in the life-sustaining interactions of humans with other species and the physical environment” (p. 203). In other words, ecolinguistics examines the role of language in either forming and maintaining relationships between humans and other species or destroying this relationship.

1.2. Ecosophy:

Ecosophy is a philosophical approach to ecology and the eco-system. Similar to ideology, it varies from one person to another. Several ecolinguists reveal their ecosophy. Ching (2022:190) argues that “Ecosophy is the criterion for the judgment of the ecological property and orientation of discourse. It plays a directional guiding role in people’s mind, discourse, and ecological behaviour; in turn, they can also influence ecosophy, so together they form a cycle.” In his book, *New developments in ecological discourse analysis*, He adopts the ecosophy of “Diversity and Harmony, Interaction and coexistence.” According to his ecosophy, discourse can be judged as eco-beneficial if the discourse follows the ecosophy, eco-ambivalent if it neither follows nor violates the ecosophy, and eco-destructive if it violates the ecosophy. Wu (2018:249) asserts that “Ecosophies range along a series of spectra from anthropocentric to ecocentric, optimistic to pessimistic, and neoliberal to socialist, localist or anarchist.”

The ecosophy that Stibbe (2015) adopts in his book is that of “living.” All species, including humans, should value their lives, and do their best to continue living well and preserve the life for future generation by reducing global consumption. Thus, it is positively appraised. As such, ecosophy is “strongly based on intrinsic or ‘larger-than-self’ values, i.e. care for other people and other species.” as opposed to “extrinsic” which promotes destructive behaviour towards the environment through its focus on enrichments and profits.

1.3. Ecological discourse analysis:

Ecological discourse analysis plays an essential role in dealing with ecological issues. According to Stibbe (2015) (critical) discourse analysis of ecological texts aid in how people think of their relationships with each other, the environment, and other species. Not only does this analysis reveal discourses that are ecologically destructive, but it promotes for stories that contributes to safeguarding the environment with its human and non-human lives. Through ecological discourse, as Stibbe (2015: 23) argues, the ideologies “belief systems” of a particular culture, group or institution are conveyed.

Alexander and Stibbe (2014) distinguish three types of ecological analysis. The first is the analysis of ecological discourse, which focuses on humans' selection of certain lexis and grammatical structures to talk about ecology. The second type is the ecological analysis of discourse, where discourses “are analysed within an ecological framework which considers the impact of the discourses on the systems which support life”. Finally, the approach termed language ecology, which examines the relationships between languages and how they can become endangered or extinct. They conclude by stating that “all discourses have a potential impact on human behaviour, and that all human behaviour has a potential impact on the ecosystems that support life” (2014: 6)

2. Data and Methodology:

The current research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach to analyse extracts from 12 stories written by Bond. The focus of the analysis is the lexical choices, the processes, and participant types in transitivity patterns. The selection is based on clauses where nature or elements from nature play the role of participants or circumstance. The analysis integrates an ecological framework with a linguistic framework. Halliday's functional grammar (2014), Martin's (2004) Positive Discourse Analysis (PDA) and Stibbe's (2015) Ecolinguistics model are incorporated for the analysis of the selected data. The methodology adopted for PDA involves the close examination of the collection of stories to reveal the ecosophy (ecological philosophy) that is conveyed by specific linguistic choices. To reveal the ecosophy of the writer, the researcher focuses on the material and existential processes of the selected clauses since they are the predominant process type in the 175

selected extracts. Stibbe (2018: 176) argues that “the discourse is judged positive if the stories are consistent with the principles of the ecosophy.”

3. Research questions:

- How Children’s discourse can be analysed as a new “story to live by” in the current unsustainable civilization?
- What clusters of linguistic features are used to convey Bond’s ecosophy?

4. Review of literature and theoretical framework:

Many linguists investigated the utilisation of language to either destroy or promote for the sustainability of the ecosystem in various discourses: corporate discourse, media discourse, reports, presidential speeches, and literary works. Alexander (2018) utilises critical discourse analysis along with corpus linguistic to investigate the texts of partnership between Coca-Cola and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) on water preservation and climate protection. He found out that environmental destruction is disguised through euphemism and the utilisation of abstract nouns and nominalisation. He emphasises that these language techniques serve as a “massive campaign to control the agenda and to crowd out critical voices” (Alexander 2018: 206). Similarly, using an ecolinguistic approach, Ahmed et al. (2021) investigated advertisements where metaphor played a role to enhance and raise sensual appeal in the consumer towards products. They focus on the utilisation of metaphor to indirectly influence the consumer to choose the advertised product. On the other hand, Mansyur et al. (2021) examined environmental, ecological and climate change representation in President Joko Widodo’s speech for COP21 (2015). They integrated Fairclough’s three-dimensional model with Stibbe’s ecolinguistics to provide an eco-critical discourse analysis and concluded that the president’s speech uses language in a way that categorise it as beneficial.

Goatly (2018: 228) argues that “we likely accept the ordering of experience imposed on us by language as natural and common sense.” He investigated the role of lexicogrammar of a language in shaping our worldview and conceptualising our experience of the environment using metaphors. He compared the lexicogrammar of the State of the World 2012 (SOTW) with nature poetry of Wordsworth and Edward Thomas and concluded that Wordsworth and Thomas have more intransitive than transitive clauses which is not the case with (SOTW) and nature as

experience is less common in SOTW than in nature poetry. Likewise, Cook (2015) attempts a linguistic and discursive representation of animals by analysing two interviews from a bigger research project with the aim of adding “to understanding of the role of language in the conceptualisation of animals.” The project investigates how human-animal interactions are tackled in writing and speaking to provide evidence about their contribution to the conservation of the environment and the different species. He started by explaining the two opposing concepts of Human exceptionalism and animal rights. He concluded that the discourse of animal rights’ opponents uses new terminology that is distinguished from the mainstream discourse of the advocates of human exceptionalism, in terms of its underlying beliefs and language use. (597).

Halliday (2001:179) emphasizes the powerful and vital role that language plays in not only reflecting reality, but also creating it. The lexicogrammar of the language evolves with the cultural changes. The concepts of the material world are created by language prior to their existence. Lakoff (2006:20) similarly asserted that “The words draw you into their worldview.” Halliday foreshadows the possibilities of having a dilapidated planet in the future and that

the things which may rule out this possibility and which we ourselves have brought about - classism, growthism, destruction of species, pollution and the like - are not just problems for the biologists and physicists. They are problems for the applied linguistic community as well...we have to learn to educate five billion children (and that is an applied linguistic task if ever there was one!) to alter this disaster before it is too late. (Halliday 2001:199)

The framework adopted integrates the linguistic theories of Martin (2004) Positive Discourse Analysis, and Halliday’s (2014) systemic functional grammar along with Stibbe’s (2015, 2021) ecolinguistics. The frames and the clusters of linguistic patterns in Bond’s writing are examined using these frameworks to reveal the underling stories (mental ideas) that shape the Indian society in an attempt to influence those of the international community through his literary style.

In *Ecolinguistics: language, ecology and the stories-we-live-by*, Stibbe (2015:1) distinguishes eight types of stories to examine everyday

language. These stories include ideologies, framings, metaphors, evaluations, identities, convictions, erasure, and salience. He defines “stories” as “cognitive structures in the minds of individuals which influence how they perceive the world. Stories-we-live-by are stories in the minds of multiple individuals across a culture.” (6) The stories are cognitive frames that shape our concepts, thoughts and ideas and influence the way we, as humans, treat each other and the environment using language. Stibbe asserts that language is ambivalent if it neither promotes nor destroys the ecosystem. If language enables people to respect and support the ecosystem, it is then beneficial and should be promoted. Otherwise, it is destructive and should be restricted. He argues that we are constantly exposed to these stories in different aspects of life, e.g. advertisements, news reports, education, politics, without being consciously aware of them.

He maintains that “language can inspire us to destroy or protect the ecosystems ... Ecolinguistics, then, is about critiquing forms of language that contribute to ecological destruction, and aiding in the search for new forms of language that inspire people to protect the natural world.” The “eco” in ecolinguistics, according to Stibbe, refers to the relationships of humans to other humans, organisms and the environment with the aim of protecting the ecosystem for the well-being and survival of all. The “linguistics” in ecolinguistics refers to the linguistic techniques that are used to reveal the cognitive frames we-live-by.

Lackoff, one of the initiators of cognitive science, states that “we are suffering from massive hypocognition (absence of frames) in the case of the environment.” This can be attributed to the fact that we are cognitively accustomed to the separation between human and nature and treating it as “the other” that can be exploited without repentance. This separation as Lakoff (2010:77) asserts, forms a false frame that is engraved in our conceptual system and that will not be easily erased. He distinguishes between conservative and progressive moral systems, where the former works against environmentalism, which is the primary concern of the latter. He indorses that:

The values at the heart of the progressive moral system are empathy, responsibility (personal and social), and the ethic of excellence (make the world better, starting with yourself). Empathy has a physical basis in the mirror neuron system, which links us physiologically to other beings (e.g., the polar bears) and to things

(e.g., redwoods) in the natural world. This leads us to see inherent value in the natural world. (2010:76)

Systemic Functional Grammar is concerned with the appropriateness of form to the communicative purpose in a specific context. How grammar is organized to communicate meaning. The basic concept for the realization of meaning in Halliday's (2014) theory, is that of "metafunctions," which is categorized into ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The textual deals with the meaning of the clause as a message. The ideational is further divided into experiential and logical. The experiential deals with the meaning of the clause as a representation and the logical constructs relationships among various clauses. Finally, the interpersonal metafunction deals with the meaning of the clause as an exchange. "It is the structure as a whole, the total configuration of functions, that construes, or realizes, the meaning." (83)

The transitivity system, as described by Halliday (2014:138), refers to the system for describing the clause with its three components the participant, the process and the circumstance. The process refers to the verb that can be one of six types: material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioural and existential. Each process is realized by special participant role. Actor and goal are the two participants in the material process. Sayer and phenomena are two participants in mental process, identifier and identified in the relational process, and Sayer and verbiage/receiver in the verbal process. The behavioural and existential processes are distinguished for having one participant: the behavior and existent respectively. Integrating the transitivity system with ecolinguistic approach is intended to highlight the ecological significance of the clauses and classify them as beneficial, destructive, or ambivalent. According to Halliday there is a difference between actor and agent. The first occurs in a material clause as subject in an active clause, whereas the second occurs in an effective clause (passive clause following the preposition 'by').

Positive Discourse Analysis (PDA) is a new development stemming from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Stibbe (2018: 174) asserts that "Positive Discourse Analysis is based on a similar methodology to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), involving detailed examination of texts to reveal hidden ideologies that are subtly conveyed by the use of particular linguistic features." Martin (2004) initiates the concept of PDA

which shares CDA in its aim of inflicting social change. However, it differs from CDA in focus, perspective, activities, and object of analysis. Primarily, the perspective of PDA is positive as opposed to critical in CDA. Where CDA focuses on oppressive discourse, PDA focuses on progressive discourse. The data analysed using PDA are usually texts “we like” as opposed to texts “we criticize” using CDA. The activity carried out by the analysis is usually (re)constructive in the case of PDA as opposed to deconstructive with CDA. Thus, PDA is mainly concerned with discourse that encourages, inspires and that gratifies us. Macgilchrist (2007:74) proclaims that “PDA describes what texts 'do well' and 'get right' in our eyes.” Hence the choice of PDA as a sustainable frame for the analysis of the selected data from Children’s stories is privileged.

In exemplifying PDA, Martin examines the narrative, voice and feeling in discourses dealing with the reconciliation with Indigenous people in Australia. He also examined the autobiography of Nelson Mandela and the music of U2 using the same approach to discourse. He (2004: 184) argues that taking a positive stand requires valuing social change positively, and placing social and cultural values “on the line in a way that is not demanded by critique.”

Waugh et al (2016: 96) maintain that

PDA serves the role of making visible different social actors by giving voice and thus presence to those who have been traditionally marginalized by dominant discourse practices. PDA fills the gaps in CDA analysis by recognizing the marginalized voices of the oppressed in new multimodal genres.

The voice that is marginalized and made prominent in the current research is the voice of nature. Since nature has been abused by man for so long, the voice of nature is analysed in this paper as the voice of the marginalized and oppressed. It is analysed in Bond’s works as he centralizes it in a unique way in the majority of his writings. The language used in Bond’s stories can be classified as PDA since it

contains clusters of linguistic features which come together to portray the world in ways which encourage respect and care for nature. These clusters of features draw from the standard grammar

and lexicon but arrange the words and grammatical features in ways that tell a different story about the world. (Stibbe 2018: 168)

5. Analysis:

Contrary to contemporary discourses exploiting the ecosystem through promoting for economic growth, progress, technological and industrial advances, all of which lead to the currently experienced problems of biodiversity loss, climate change, food insecurity, water depletion and alienation from nature, what Bond is doing through his literary works is promoting for the love of ecology and advocating closeness to nature. He challenges the ecologically destructive stories by focusing on formerly neglected stories that we could live by.

5.1 Overview of the stories:

Natural elements are found to play the role of the protagonist in twelve titles, in comparison to only one human character, who is still presented in coordination with a natural element. Every title focuses on an element from nature presented either in a nominal group, or a noun phrase within a prepositional phrase. The natural element is either the head of the nominal group preceded by an adjectival modifier as in *A special tree*, *Those three bears*, *The coral tree*, *Wild fruit*, *Romi and the wildfire*, or as a modifier in a nominal group as is *Tiger my friend*, *Monkey trouble*, and *Snake trouble*. Noun phrases within a prepositional phrase is evident in *The school among the Pines*, *The wind on Haunted Hill*. In these titles, nature as powerful and having the upper hand is highlighted by the Pines infolding the school, and the wind fearlessly preponderating the haunted hill that is feared by humans. The titles developed into clauses in *When the trees walked* and *The night the roof blew off*. Both titles entice the reader to delve more into the story to find out what happened. Attributing a human active verb (walked) to the trees, in a dependent clause, is intentionally done to portray the aptitude of the trees. In the second title, which is a simple independent clause, is having the wind as an implicit agent of the action 'blew off' raises the readers' curiosity to realise the outcome.

The cherry tree revolves around the life of the tree from the start when it was a seed in Rakesh's hand. Though Rakesh is the human protagonist of the story, however, the real protagonist is the tree, as the story revolves around its growth from a seed to a twig to a small tree and finally a big tree that is taller than both Rakesh and his grandfather. Rakesh follows this growth through the seasonal changes, that are vividly portrayed, and

keeps a careful watch to protect it from birds and harmful insects. With the passage of the years, and because of his nurture and care, a special bond is built between Rakesh and the tree similar to a family bond. Because he dedicated himself to looking after the tree with affection and compassion, he was rewarded by its fruits and grandfather was rewarded by its shade towards the end of the story. The moral is that nature compensate by protecting and rewarding those who care for it.

Tiger my friend tells about a single tiger who, due to his wisdom and knowledge of human tricks, was able to escape from the hunters who already killed thirty-to-forty tigers. The villagers are after this tiger because they think it attacks their cattle. But Chottu, the protagonist, knew that if they did, there will never be tigers in the forest again and he will never hear its roar again. So he made several attempts to save the tiger from the villagers. *Roni and the wildfire* discusses the problem of the destruction of the forest by a wildfire resulting in the evacuation of people and the death or displacement of animals causing imbalance in the ecosystem.

5.2 Experiential metafunction and ecolinguistics:

This section attempts a linguistic representation of the relationship between human characters in Bond's stories and their natural environment. It examines the ecological features of the transitivity system with its three components: the process type (PRO), participants (PR) and circumstance (CR) as suggested by Halliday (2014) to distinguish between the eco-beneficial, ambivalent, and the eco-destructive components, and to identify the ecosophy that Bond adopts in his collection of stories. The process is the core of the clause with the participant(s) playing an essential role in the realisation of the process. The circumstance elaborates on the meaning of the process with aspects such as time, space, location, causality, and condition.

5.2.1. Material processes:

5.2.1.1. Relationship between human participant (HP) & nature participant (NP):

Material processes are those of doing, happening, and creating. Humans are influencing nature in different ways through the material processes. The analysis focuses first on human participants, as agents in material processes, inflicting actions on nature or other species. Then, it investigates elements in nature as participants performing processes on other elements in nature.

Humans in the examples depicted are either nature carers or demolishers. In the first case, humans are eco-beneficial and in the second they are eco-destructive.

(1) *His father and mother lived in a small village fifty miles away, where they **grew** maize and rice and barley in narrow terraced fields on the lower slopes of the mountain. (A special tree: p.3)*

The clause describes the relationship between the father and mother on one hand and the different crops (maize, rice and barley), on the other. The human participants (father & mother) perform the action process “growing” affecting the second participants, elements in nature, in a good way. The use of the material process “grew”, denotes flourishing and continuity. According to Sibbe’s (2015) ecosophy, since the action denoted by the process is beneficiary to nature, so it is considered as eco-beneficial.

(2) *In an act of affection, Rakesh **gave** it a sprinkling and **circled** it with pebbles. (A special tree: p.5)*

The semantic configuration in this clause is human participant (HP) (boy) + material process (gave) (circled) + Nature participant (NP) (seed) which is affected by the giving and the circling. The choice of the verb “give” is intentionally made to primarily indicate that humans are supposed to give nature not just abuse it and exhaust its resources. Bond’s choice of “gave” instead of “sprinkled” triggers the image of someone giving a gift to a friend or lover, where “sprinkled” would not have the same effect, and where its nominalization is more appropriate to indicate the gentle treatment by which the boy treats the seed. Similarly, the action process “circled” triggers the image of a fortress built around for protection.

In another instance, Bond portrays the boy’s fondness of the seed that grew to be a full tree.

(3) *He **touch**ed the smooth bark of the tree that he had grown. He **ran** his hand along the trunk of the tree and **put** his finger to the tip of a leaf. (A special tree: p.11)*

The semantic configuration is HP (boy) + material processes (touches, ran, put) +NP. The harmonious relationship in this clause developed from being between humans and nature, to being between the HP’s senses and body parts (hand, finger) and the structure of the tree (bark, trunk, leaf). The action processes touching, running the hands and putting a finger indicates the gentleness by which the HP deals with the NP as a lover in a sensual relationship. Hence, the impossibility that the boy can harm the

tree in any way. Thus, the processes in the clause are categorised as eco-beneficial.

In another instance, Bond portrays the prudence with which Rakesh handled the caterpillar upon seeing it feeding on the green leaves of the tree. Even though it is harmful to the tree, the material processes that regulate this clause are “removed” and “dropped” and not easily “killed.” This is a further specimen of the respect that Bond wants people to have with nature. Furthermore, the second clause, being an imperative, has the semantic configuration of a verbal process (come) + verbiage with the implicit NP (caterpillar). The imperative given by Rakesh to the caterpillar is a way of implicitly informing it that it is not totally unwelcomed, but at a later stage in its cycle, when it is less harmful, it will be given the freedom to rest on the green leaves. Thus, the imperative is not a simple command, but it offers a suggestion at the same time.

(4) *Rakesh **removed** it quickly and **dropped** it on a heap of dry leaves.*

Come back when you're a butterfly,' he said. (A special tree: p.10)

The relationship established between human participants as carers and ecological elements is promoted through using positive material verbs denoting respect, care, and affection. This harmonious relationship corresponds to He et al.'s (2021: 54) ecosophy of “diversity and harmony, interaction and co-existence”, and the ecosophy of “living” suggested by Stibbe (2015).

However, this ecosophy contrasts with the material processes accompanying the participants of nature demolishers. Through his stories, Bond draws children's attention to ecological problems that Indian villages are facing.

(5) *There was a time when this forest **had provided** a home for some thirty to forty tigers, but men in search of skins and trophies **had shot** them all, and now there remained only one old tiger in the jungle. (Tiger my friend, p.38)*

The semantic configuration for the first material process is agent (forest) + process (provided) + circumstance (a home). Nature exemplified by forest is the provider of shelter and protection to tigers. That is, nature is co-beneficial to itself, away from human's interference. This contrasts with the rest of the clause where the participant role is (men) + Process (had shot) + participant (them all). Both the process of shooting, and the doer are eco-destructive. Foregrounding the cause behind the shooting of tigers as simply to possess skin and gain trophies, is to portray the act as trivial to the grave act of shooting. Similarly, in

(6) *"They're **blasting** the mountain". 'said Miss Ramola.
'End of a mountain,' said Mr Mani **mournfully** (The school among the pines, p.20)*

The choice of the verb "blasting" is meant to symbolise the sever act of breaking apart the massive natural marvel. In addition, the choice of the verb "root up" in the following example shows the relationship between man and nature as destructive. By pointing out that they deracinate "healthy, leafy plants," Bond aggravates the ruthless deed carried out by nature demolishers and establishes a frame in children's mind of their destructive actions.

*(7) the sound of them digging industriously as they **rooted up** those healthy, leafy plants, made him tremble with rage and indignation. The unfairness of it all. (The school among the pines, p.17)*

*(8) he (grandfather) **built** a bungalow on the outskirts of Dehradun, **planting** trees all around.*

The location circumstance role "all around" in addition to nominalisation, "planting", emphasise the extensive range of the trees, occupying more space than that used by the bungalow.

5.2.1.1.1 Passivisation:

In the following instances, the material processes are realised by passive verbal groups. Passives are classified as agentive or agentless. Human agents in the following passive clauses are found to be implicit. For instance,

*(9) a wide tunnel **had been bored** through the mountain to divert the river into another channel. (intransitive) The human agent responsible for the material process "bored" is implicit.*

*(10) 'Will the whole town **be swallowed up** by the waters of the dam?' asked Bina.*

*'Yes, all of it,' said Miss Ramola. 'The clock tower and the old palace. The long bazaar, and the temples, the schools and the jail, and hundreds of houses, for many miles up the valley. All those people will have to go – thousands of them! Of course, they'll **be resettled** elsewhere.'* (The school among the pines, p.20)

*'The local people **will be given** new homes, somewhere else.'* Miss Ramola

To be uprooted like this – a town and hundreds of villages – and put down somewhere on the hot, dusty plains – seemed to her unbearable. (The school among the pines, p.20)

The responsibility for the catastrophic outcomes of building the dam are left implicit. The implicit agent (government) is responsible for uprooting, resettling the people of the town, and for giving them new homes, but “elsewhere.” Water as the powerful natural agent of the material process “swallowed up” is portrayed as being capable of destroying a whole town with its constituents. Focusing on “the whole town” in the passive construction is a way of highlighting the massiveness of the destruction caused by building the dam. The material processes: swallowed up, resettled, uprooted and put down are all eco-destructive. Though the material process “given” is positive in the sense of providing followed by the object new homes, yet the satisfaction is incomplete as the new homes will be “elsewhere” and not in the vicinity where they are accustomed.

In other instances, where the disruption of the eco-system is laid on the dam and not on the actual executors of the action, is evident in:

*(11) There had been talk of a cattle-killer in the valley, of leopards and other animals **being displaced** by the construction of a dam, as yet no one had heard of a leopard attacking a man. (The school among the pines, p.14)*

*(12) the leopard, **robbed** of its forest by the dam, had taken to attacking dogs and cattle near the villages (The school among the pines, p.22)*

*(13) The animal had made this area its own since **being forced** to leave the dam area. (The school among the pines, p.23)*

The government, the implicit agent hidden behind the inanimate dam, is again indirectly held responsible for the mishaps of the innocent leopard. The dam is the agent of the material process “robbed.” The dam is personified as a thief, a forceful evacuator, who deprived the leopard from its home in order to keep the real robber and evacuator, the government, implicit. It is the decisions of the officials in the government that is indirectly held responsible for the robbing, displacing, and forcing the innocent animal out of its normal habitat to expand the urban areas.

The brutality of the government in dealing with the environment is further enforced in the following example, where again the real agent in the passive construction is implicit, and the explicit agents are the inanimate explosives and bulldozers of the material processes, “felled, rocked and bludgeoned,” inflicted on the hill and the old trees.

(14) *all the trees in the vicinity were felled (including the friendly old oak) and the hillside was rocked by explosives and bludgeoned by bulldozers. I decided it was time to move. (And now we are twelve, p.97)*

All the material processes in the passive constructions are eco-destructive. Bond alerts his readers that the implicit agent, “the government,” responsible for all the material processes, is itself eco-destructive. Thus, through transitivity, Bond raises children’s ecological awareness and shape their behaviour.

5.2.1.2. Relationship between nature participants (NP) in material processes:

This section focuses on material processes where the two participants are elements from nature, in the case of transitive clauses, or where the clause has a single participant from nature and a circumstance following the material process. Halliday (2014: 386) believes that “The grammar has to work harder to turn inanimate objects into agents; but this is a notable feature of the discourse of ecology, which attempts to construe an eco-social reality in which the potential for effective action is not limited to the class of human beings.”

The destructive force of nature is presented by the agentless passive “broke out” where the “forest fire” is the sole powerful participant responsible for the nominalised eco-destructive actions of destroying and killing. Similarly, the wind is portrayed as powerful and destructive agent in the material process of taking and carrying sparks to assist in its spreading further and causing more damage.

(15) *forest fires broke out, destroying shrubs and trees, killing birds and small animals. (The school among the pines, p.22)*

(16) *The forest had been shrinking year by year, as more people had moved into the area; (Tiger my friend, p.44)*

(17) *the wind would take sparks from the trees and carry them into the dry grass and leaves, so that new fires would spring up before the old ones had died out. (The school among the pines, p.22)*

(18) *Flames shot up from the dry grass and ran up the trunks of trees and along the branches. Smoke billowed out above the forest. (The wind on Haunted hill, p.33)*

(19) *Sparrows attacked sacks of grain, monkeys made off with bananas, and stray cows and dogs rummaged in refuse bins, but nobody took any notice. (The school among the pines, p.21)*

Though animals and birds are given agency for the destructive acts realised by the material processes of “attacking”, “rummaging” and

“making off”, such acts are normal and acceptable from these creatures and pass by unnoticed, which is not the case where humans are the agents of such acts. This can be attributed to the fact that the eco-destructive processes in this case are performed to obtain food, which is a natural process in the eco-system, and not simply to obtain material possessions, if the doers were humans.

Besides showing nature as potent on itself through the use of eco-destructive material processes, Bond presents nature as bountiful through his use of eco-beneficial material processes “brought” and its circumstance “life” to indicate that our existence depends on the generosity of nature, and its sudden growth “sprung up,” to satisfy humans’ necessities. The lexical choice of “protection” and acquainting it to trees, is to indicate the support provided from a stronger entity “the tree” to the weaker entities “wild plants and grasses.”

(20) *Out of the earth and rock and leafless boughs, the magic **touch** of the rains had **brought** life and greenness. (When the trees walk, p. 70)*

(21) *looking around I noticed that other smaller trees, wild plants and grasses had **sprung up** under their (tree’s) protection. (When the trees walk, p. 71)*

(22) *A month had passed, and wild violets, daisies and buttercups now **sprinkled** the hill slopes, (The school among the pines, p.18)*

The choice of the material process “sprinkled” portrays the generosity of different types of flowers in scattering all over the hill and providing a pleasant scenery.

(23) *Those first few drops (of rain) on the dusty path **made them (children) cry out with excitement.** (The school among the pines, p.22)*

“Those first few drops on the dusty path” are presented as the agent in the clause. Although being modified as ‘few,’ the drops of rain were able to perform the action process of creating something. The manner “cry out with excitement” emphasises the magical effect on the children. Nature is presented as agent in a passive clause, having an upper hand over humans in being able to guide them in their distress.

(24) *She found her way into the ruins, **helped by** the constant flicker of lightning (The wind on haunted hill, p.31)*

By placing nature as the agent participant in the material processes, Bond framed it in a positive way presenting a worldview that values interdependence of the different species. Thus, he fosters protection of the larger system that supports life.

5.2.2 Mental processes:

Material processes are not the only processes denoting relationship between man and nature. Mental processes, though relatively few in

comparison to material processes, are also deployed to enhance the relationship between human and nature.

(25) He **wanted** it (cherry tree) to **know** that he was there.

(26) But the trees **seemed to know** me; they **whispered** among themselves and **beckoned** me nearer. (When the trees walked, p. 71)

(27) As we sat there in the soft sunshine of a North Indian winter, I saw **the tendril moving** slowly towards Grandfather. Twenty minutes later, it had crossed the step and **was touching** his feet. (When the trees walked, p. 69)

The human quality of moving and touching (27) is attributed to the tendril plant portraying it as having the capability of seeing the person, feeling his presence and having the sensation of touching. Using desiderative mental process indicates the boy's wish that the plant would have the cognitive mental process of "knowing" (25, 26) about his existence. Personifying nature extends further to embody the sensual and mental characteristics of humans. The trees are portrayed as being capable of recognising their guardian and instructing him to approach it. Nature as participant in mental processes is evident in several other instances in Bond's stories. The sun is tenderly touching (28), the seed has luck (29), the cherry tree has aim (30).

(28) The sun had come up and **was touching** the top of the wall. (The wind on Haunted hill, p. 30)

(29) **Are** cherry seeds lucky?' (A special tree, p.8)

(30) the cherry tree **had no intention** of dying (A special tree, p.10)

5.2.3 Existential processes:

In addition to material and mental processes, Bond employs abundance of existential processes to highlight the presence of nature and its various elements as an essential part of survival. Existential clauses are usually clauses of being, beginning with "there" and occupying subject position, or utilises verb "to be" to indicate existence. Halliday (2014:308) argues that "they serve to introduce central participants in the Placement (Setting, Orientation) stage at the beginning of a story"

(31) the old town **was** still spread out across the valley and from a distance it **looked** quite charming and picturesque. (The school among the pines, p.20)

(32) But the town's **been** here for hundreds of years,' said Bina. 'They **were** quite happy without the dam, weren't they?' (The school among the pines, p.20)

(33) 'There have to be tigers,' said Chottu. 'Can **there be** an India without tigers?' (Tiger my friend, p.44)

(34) *'We are cubs too!' said Sonu. 'Yes,' said Bina. 'And there's still plenty of space for all of us. Even when the dam is ready there will still be room for leopards and humans.'* (the school among the pines, p. 24)

In his argument to defend the habitat of the tigers, Sonu, as a young boy, acquaint himself and his friends to cubs. By using the existential verb "are" Bond intensifies the unity between humans and nature and presents the vivid picture to children, where they can imagine themselves being displaced from their homes and the agitation that they could encounter.

Meteorological processes, as stated by Halliday (2014: 309) fall between existential and material processes. They are employed to introduce the weather, the flowers, and seasons as mighty actors, having free will, and performing the intransitive material action of approaching in due course. Bond portrays nature as autonomous and influential by placing it as the sole agent in intransitive clauses. Out of the 175 clauses extracted from the analysed stories, 110 clauses are found to be intransitive and where an element from nature is the actor.

(35) *the cherry tree has come up!*

(36) *That year the monsoon rains came early*

(37) *Ferns sprang from the trunks of trees, strange-looking lilies came up in the long grass, and even when it wasn't raining the trees dripped and mist came curling up the valley.*

(38) *Towards the end of the rainy season new leaves appeared on the tree*

(39) *summer came round again,*

(40) *Winter came early.*

(41) *the sun came out*

(42) *a cold wind blew down from the snows*

(43) *the wild duck flew north*

5.3. Metaphors as frames:

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 58) metaphor is a sort of mapping from a "source domain" to a "target domain." Sullivan (2013:23) elaborates that the source domain is made of frames. In his attempt to show the relationship between metaphors and frames, Stibbe (2015: 63) argues that "Metaphors use a frame from a specific, concrete and imaginable area of life to structure how a clearly distinct area of life is conceptualised." Conceptualisation of nature as a human being by attributing human parts, human feelings, and human traits to it is intentionally achieved by Bond in his attempt to resolve the human-nature boundary. Abundance of extracts from Bond's stories anthropomorphises nature either by portraying it with human organs or by presenting it as agents of material processes that are usually constrained to humans. Breman (2001:262) asserts that "This process

of personification creates a way of looking at the world which sets up an object or other being with recognizable human characteristics.”

(44) *Peepul trees are great showoffs. Even when there is no breeze, their **broad-chested, slim-waisted** leaves will spin like tops **determined** to attract your attention and **invite** you into the shade (When the trees walked, p. 69)*

As a way of identifying humans with nature, Bond provides a detailed portrayal of the structure of the leaves as healthy athletic humans having mental capability to determine, and qualified to perform the verbal process of inviting.

(45) *But they're (trees) always **trying to move**. See how they **reach out** with their **arms!** (When the trees walked, p. 70)*

(46) *Yes, the trees we had planted long ago had multiplied. They **were walking** again. (When the trees walked, p. 71)*

(47) *There were some sounds that Suraj couldn't recognise – sounds that came from the trees, **creakings** and **whisperings**, as though the trees were coming alive, **stretching** their **limbs** in the dark, shifting a little, reflexing their **fingers**. (The tunnel, p.83)*

Not only are the trees portrayed having the same physical features as humans (arms, limbs, fingers), but even the material processes of walking, reaching out, and moving, performed by the tree are anthropomorphised. Through the detailed personification of the structure of the tree (47) to resemble the human body with its details, young readers gain profound awareness of their surrounding environment and become connected to it and more engaged in the protection act of the eco-system.

Bond opposes the anthropocentric view where humans are the centre of the universe and where nature and the eco-system are at his endowment. Goatly (2018:246) asserts that “the power of nature was recognized though personification and co-ordination to problematize the human/nature division.” The source domain around which Bond's stories revolve is the human body. The target domains are different elements in nature such as the trees, the sun, and animals of different types. By using personification, which is a specific type of metaphor, Bond attempts to merge nature with humans. Mountains are presented as giant humans walking confidently with their tops hidden in the clouds, while shadows are in an infantile stage creeping securely across the garden.

(48) *he could see the mountains **striding** away into the clouds. He was still lying beneath the tree when the evening shadows **crept** across the garden. (A special tree, p.8)*

The metaphorical presentation uses the frame of a party where rain is conceptualised as a drum player performing on the metal roofs, and other elements in nature: trees and leaves are performing the human physical movements of swaying and dancing.

(49) *the fire on the right lit up the road, and giant tree-shadows **danced*** (Roni and the wild fire, p.31)

(50) *wild plum tree **swaying*** (The wind on Haunted hill, p. 27)

(51) *'They're pretty leaves,' said Rakesh. 'And they are always ready to **dance**, if there's a breeze.'* (A special tree, p.8)

(52) *As she waved, the blossoms fell apart and **danced** lightly in the breeze.* (The coral tree, p.64)

(53) *she heard the rain **drumming** on a remnant of a tin roof.* (The wind on Haunted hill, p. 29)

Portraying their communication similar to a language, Bond represents monkeys, lizards, frogs and the wind as Sayers in the verbal processes of chattering, chanting, singing, and howling.

(54) *Then a band of monkeys streamed across, **chattering** excitedly.* (Roni and the wild fire, p.31)

(55) *Whoo, whoo, whoo, **howled** the wind* (The wind on Haunted hill, p. 27)

(56) *Frogs **chanted**.* (The school among the pines, p.23)

(57) *Lizards ... glistening in the sunshine, sat on a windowsill and **sang** its heart out.* (The wind on Haunted hill, p. 27) .

(58) *It (wind) **hurried** over the hills and **passed** and **hummed** and **moaned** through the tall pines and deodars* (The wind on Haunted hill, p.27)

Animals and plants are presented as companions, having equal rights as humans in living and enjoying life and not just resources, possessions, or objects as is the case in mainstream discourse.

(59) *'All the attention he's been getting has probably made him (snake) **conceited**,* said Grandfather, *picking up the python to the accompaniment of further shrieks from Aunt Ruby. 'Would you like to hold him for a minute, Ruby? He (snake) seems to **have taken a fancy** to you.'* (Snake trouble, p.55)

Attributing human adjectives, "conceited" and "take a fancy," to species other than humans, is a way that Bond uses to determine the unity of all species and to avoid centrality of humans. By ascribing personhood to animals and plants, Bond encourages the mutual and respectful relationship with them as partners. The snake is conceited and has a fancy on a human female. Stibbe (2015:173) asserts that "the distinctive linguistic patterns that they use to, for example, ascribe personhood to

animals, plants, forests and rivers, thereby encouraging respectful and mutual relationships with them.”

(60) *‘Can’t you gag that parrot?’ asked Grandfather, as the train moved out of the station and picked up speed. ‘I’ll do nothing of the sort,’ said Grandmother. ‘I’ve bought a ticket for **him**, and **he’s entitled to enjoy the journey as much as anyone.**’ (Snake trouble, 57)*

(61) *The snake felt rather cold and slippery and at first **he gave me goose pimples**. But I soon got used to him, and **he must have liked** the way I handled him, because when I set him down **he wanted** to climb up my leg.*

(62) ***He**(python) **stared** out at me with unblinking, expressionless eyes. There was no way of knowing what **he** (Python) **was thinking**, if indeed he thought at all.*

Personification is also evident in the pronominal reference to the snake in one instance and the parrot in another by the pronoun “he” instead of the common “it”. Using the pronoun “he” to refer to the snake and attributing to him the mental human properties of liking, wanting, and thinking elevates the snake to a human status. Specifying the male gender to animals, regardless of its real sex, reflects the patriarchal Indian society. Stibbe (2012: 65) argues that “The relationship between humans and other animals is, therefore, partially constructed by the language used to talk to and about them.” Emphasising the communicative ability, the wilful action, and the use of the personal pronoun “he”, children’s discourse increases the personhood of plants and animals.

(63) *The sitting room window opened directly on to the oak tree whose various denizens – ranging from stag-beetles to small birds and even an acrobatic bat – **took to darting** in and out of the cottage at various times of the day or night. (And now we are twelve, 96)*

The use of the verb “took to” indicates that they are accustomed to this act, and they are actively involved into doing it in a consistent way. “Darting in and out” frames the freedom given to beetles, birds, and bats to move liberally without the interruption of humans. It is intentionally done to expose their power and freewill and how this freewill should be respected by humans. Stibbe (2012: 65) asserts that “the discourse of ecology represents biological organisms (animals, plants, and micro-organisms) as interdependent and sustained by interactions among themselves and with their physical environment.”

6. Conclusion:

The current research utilizes Stibbe's (2015, 2021) ecolinguistics model and Halliday's (2014) transitivity system to identify the linguistic features of beneficial discourse, which highlights the good life, as opposed to discourses which attempt to expose the ecologically destructive ways inherent in news reports and media outlets. In *Great stories for children*, Bond constructs children's environmental awareness and love for nature. Through patterns of language use, he constantly directs children's attention to the love and respect of nature and the impossibility of its sustainability without giving it due care.

Through the transitivity analysis of experiential meaning, the researcher attempted to highlight the ecological property and its effectiveness in raising young reader's ecological cognition and constructing the frame of ecological concern to influence their future behaviour. The grammar used by Bond constantly makes nature the agent in the clause. Nature is the actor participant in material clauses, which forms the majority of the clauses investigated. It is a sensor in mental clauses, a Sayer in verbal clauses, and an existent in existential clauses. Even where human participants are actors in material processes, nature is still evident as circumstance. In addition, Bond's use of selected lexical items, personal pronouns and personification in many instances when portraying elements from nature [hills, trees, lightning, animals] aims at highlighting the unity and interdependence of the ecosystem, defying the myth of human centrality and the myth of their superiority over other species and the environment. Moreover, by focusing on the social relationship between humans and other species, their common emotions, and their dependence on the environment for their survival, Bond establishes cognitive structures, through language, promoting the love of nature and supporting sustainability.

Bond utilizes language along with certain discourse patterns to propagate for the love of ecology. PDA was specifically selected for the analysis of data that align around values, and compose discourses that enact a better world. His language use can be classified as "green speech," or positive, since he highlights productive behaviour to the environment as an alternative to the negative exploitation of ecology in prevalent discourses. By investigating participants, processes and circumstances in the transitivity system from an ecolinguistic perspective, the researcher attempts to reveal how Bond creates protection acts and concern for the environment in his collection of children's books, to build in them the obligation to safeguard the planet. Accordingly, the ecological discourse addressed to young readers can be categorized as eco-beneficial.

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