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DECONSTRUCTING “THE LAND IS GREEN”: AN EXAMINATION OF ECOLOGICAL DISCOURSES IN PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA

Tongshinung Goteng
Department of English
Plateau State University, Bokkos
tongshinunggoteng@plasu.edu.ng
+2348035985631

Abstract

The relationship between language and the environment has received prominence in recent times across the globe for obvious reason of the threat to mankind caused by the activities of man on the ecology. The environment is threatened because of the quest to industrialize and harmful practices in the environment which destabilize the ecology. The clear and present danger has raised awareness on the need for nations and peoples in the whole wide world by environmental campaigning organizations to beware of the looming threats to our planet. Ecolinguists have joined in raising awareness over the threats to ecology, thereby raising the bar for a global action in order to save planet earth. This study attempts to appraise the ecological awareness campaigns put in place by the Plateau State government in conserving the environment. News reports, campaigns, and public discourses can influence the thinking of citizens and thereby serve to correct harmful practices. This study uses Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to highlight the relationship that exists between language and ecology and as language use can affect the ecology. Moreover, SFL contains tools for Marxist practical and analytical tools to explore

ecological discourses. Therefore, using Marxist ecological concept as the ecosophy, we adopt the analytical tools of cohesion and appraisal of SFL to analyze the language features in some news reports selected from The Nigeria Standard newspaper on the environment in Plateau State. The analysis will show how the Marxist ecological concept is publicized and how it influences citizens' ecological awareness through language.

Keywords: ecolinguistics, ecology, ecosophy, Plateau State, systemic functional linguistics

Introduction

The nexus between language and the environment has opened a new vista for investigation for linguists. Like many other fields that have since developed into areas of studies, this intersection has attracted applied linguists to investigate how mankind has been dealing with their environment largely due to the activities of man on the natural habitat. Since ecological discourses have dominated global discussions over the threat to human existence, concerns have centered on measures to reducing the menace of human activities. This is aggravated largely by the quest for nations to industrialize. The picture of industrialization is reminiscent across Europe, Asia, US and parts of Africa. It has become eminent that since man is aware of his nefarious activities, he must therefore call himself to order on how to put a stop and begin live in a safe and clean environment despite the need for him to use natural resources for a better life. It would therefore seem that for man to curb his excesses on environmental degradation, caution will begin with discussions and this will be facilitated through the use of language. Herein lies the relationship between languages and the environment. Environmental abuse has been going on for so long a time. This does not exclude Nigeria. As a matter fact, most economic activities in the western, southern and eastern parts in the areas of prospecting for crude oil has devastated these areas. The pollution caused by the search for crude oil has harmed water bodies making it difficult for people to access potable water, adversely affecting marine life, rendering farmlands wasteful and reducing natural habitable lands. In the northern parts of the country, prospecting for minerals such as tin, columbite, monazite and recently gold in the far north has come with its effects. The narrative in these parts is that wildlife are also being destroyed. In addition, the waterbodies used by farmers for irrigation contain radioactive substances which are harmful to the human beings causing bodily diseases including terminal illnesses and diseases of various types of diseases that build up in human body systems gradually over time.

The purpose of this study is to focus of human activities as they affect the environment. The study will be domiciled only in Plateau State, located in north central Nigeria. Plateau State is reputed to be a major site for unquantifiable deposits of tin. As early as 1914, colonialists began prospecting for this important mineral and this has continued to this day. In addition, farming practices have also changed and other activities, thus generally affecting the environment. More specifically, mining, agriculture and social activities have affected the ecology in Plateau State over the years.

The harm done to the environment has been going on for some time. Human activities in the form of mining, farming and other social activities are inimical and dangerous as they pose threats to human existence. From the point of view of ecolinguistics, this work attempts to determine how environmental issues are discussed and narrated. The rationale for the study is that of combining corpus linguistics with narrative and discursive use analyses. In other words, adopting environmental discourse analysis will afford ecolinguists the opportunity to judge the behaviors and attitudes towards nature by the way writers linguistically connote them to guide readers' interpretation. The environment is under threat. This awareness is at its critical level and has become obvious for governments, environmental activists, friends of the environment and journalists to speak out. By raising awareness of the dangers caused by man, there is a chance that the environment can be preserved and saved.

This investigation aims to do an ecological discourse analysis of newspaper reports on Plateau State. This will be done to unpack the unknown Marxist concepts by figuring out how news reports affect the public's values and actions by language.

According to Marx and Engels human beings, as a part of ecology, cannot survive without nature, which, by providing means of production, benefits humans. Therefore, they should respect and conform to nature. On the other hand, people have subjective initiative to change the environment, which may do the surroundings good or harm. Thus, Marxist ecological concept, while attaching great importance to people's subjective initiative, highlights that humans should shoulder the responsibility of protecting and caring the nature.

Past administrations in Plateau State have adopted various measures to tackle environment challenges. The current administration by adopting the slogan of "The Land is Green", is deliberate to restoring the lost glory of the State as the pride of tourism in Nigeria. This slogan seems suggestive and the news reports by the Standard newspaper, owned by the government, indicates the tenacity to achieve the set goal of environmental restoration. To navigate this investigation, we hereby pose the following research questions:

1. What is the specific ecosophy implied in the news reports?
2. What are the linguistic features used to communicate the Marxist ecological concept to influence the public's values and actions in terms of cohesion and appraisal?

In an attempt to answer these questions, the objectives of the study are to:

- a. Find out what and how the reports reflect the ecosophy communicated.
- b. Contribute to a deeper understanding of the relationship between language, discourse and environmental issues.

Methodology

The data for this study are news reports, editorials and magazines on the environment as carried in The Standard newspaper. This newspaper is owned by the Plateau State Government and it was first published in 1972. The Standard is the mouth piece of the Government in terms of reporting activities and news about the State. The current study relies on any report or editorial on the environment. The twelve (12) reports were collected between February and July 2025. However, only nine (9) of the reports were found to be fit for analysis. This is informed by currency of the subject matter. What the researcher did is to carefully go through the newspaper and scan for reports on the environment and bring out how they are crafted in bringing out how human activities are negatively impacting on the environment. News discourse is an important way for the public to know how certain activities are bad for the environment and it in this regard that the newspaper plays a significant role in leading and changing people's values and actions. This study is to collect news report on the environment as reported in the Standard newspaper and investigate how these stories are reported. The study attempts to answer the two research questions posed above.

Literature review

Language is the medium through which discourses on the ecology are carried out. The role of language in this regard shows its importance in dealing with environmental concerns and challenges. Therefore, ecolinguistics needs dependable and objective apparatuses to scrutinize and present environmental challenges. Different scholars (Halliday, Re and Stibbe) have called on ecolinguists to be circumspect in their dealings with ecological problems and their consequences for language so that linguistics will hold its place of pride in current challenges of environmental challenges. Reiterating the importance of linguistics in ecolinguistics, Ali (13) points out that it offers the tools, methods and techniques to study contexts, phenomena, events and texts from a specific approach. It therefore means that through language, ecolinguistics attempts to present the veritable tools and techniques to examine ecolinguistic topics.

Tracing its development, Li (279) noted that ecolinguistics has evolved into a branch of linguistics in the early 1990s and it is committed to studying the impact of language on human beings, environment, and other animals. He goes further to list two approaches to the study of ecolinguistic research, as the Haugenian approach and the Hallidayan approach. These approaches are closely linked to Einar Haugen

and Michael Alexander Halliday. For Haugen, human languages have their own living environment. He believes that one of the prerequisites for the growth and development of a given language is a good environment. On the other hand, Halliday's approach focuses on how meaning construction method affects human impact on the environment.

Extending the conversation further, Poole (1) opined that ecolinguistics explores how language mediates and shapes how people think about and engage with physical spaces, non-human animals and the environment. Poole's position is not distant from Li's and can be said to be almost at par. For Alexander and Stibbe (104) they proposed that ecolinguistics is the study to examine the relationship between human beings, other organisms and the physical environment especially how language maintains, influences or even destroys it. In other words, ecolinguistics is a subject formed by the combination of ecology and linguistics and is an interdisciplinary field of natural science and humanities. Discourses on ecolinguistics do not take place in a vacuum. It is for this reason that Wei and Rong (19) have said that in ecolinguistics, discourses about the environment are environmental discourses which are carried out through linguistic representation of their relationship.

The realization of this has made mankind aware of the negative consequences of their activities (Al Thekrallah, 6). The adventure of investigating the relationship between language and the environment by Haugen (325) focuses on the interaction with emphasis on the role of language in ameliorating or exacerbating observable environmental mismanagement. The Norwegian linguist's interest primarily focused on the effects of the multiplicity of languages in an environment and the role and function each will perform. Haugen goes further to relate the ecology of language to the ecology that exists between animals and plants in their environment. With the birth of the field of ecolinguistics, the world today has shifted attention to how the ecology and language intersect and it requires repairs because of the damage done on the environment. It would seem like researchers, scholars, and more specifically linguists have adequately responded to the global need for a better environment.

Discourses have been ongoing and discussions will involve the use of the language to mitigate the menace. The focus of ecolinguistics is therefore language and the ecological environment. It does not exclude any part of the world. In another sense, it includes every part of the world. It is imperative to note that ecolinguistics has developed at a critical time because of the need of linguists to protect the ecology through language (Dash, 381). A crucial question that arises is how linguists connect

language and environment. This is navigated through stories as told by people and this is facilitated through language which helps in the transmission as the stories are over and over (Ali, 13).

The imbalance caused by man on nature by activities leading to industrialization and urbanization are the primary reason why ecolinguistics is interacting with the environment to correct the wrong. In a bid to right the wrong, secondary nature surfaced in the fields of environmental, geography and cultural studies (Cronon, 13). These human activities have altered the natural landscape and caused scholars to seek an understanding between man and the natural habitat. Grove (45) argues that man's activities have resulted in the alteration of the ecosystem which has also led to the loss of biodiversity thereby allowing for the alteration of natural landscape into anthropogenic environments. He goes on to state that secondary nature came about through the influence of social and cultural factors which resonate our values, beliefs and practices. Gandy (198) maintains that the implications of secondary nature include land fragmentation and ecosystem degradation. Furthermore, understanding secondary nature is important to mapping strategies for conserving biodiversity, land use planning and ecosystem restoration.

Similarly, Huang and Chen (38) and Zhang (144) have acknowledged the perception of ecolinguistics is that, in general, it is a field of study that cares about the relationship between language and ecology. Re (29) has argued that environmental stories can be found in different sources which include media representations such as newspaper reports, advertisements, cartoons and daily conversations. Going further, Stibbe (4) noted that in the process of analyzing the stories about the environment, a linguist will be able unearth the fundamental ideologies which shape environmental attitudes and behaviors. This shows the nexus between language and ecology. According to Stibbe, stories can be told in eight different ways. *Ideologies* are mental models that are shared by a community; *metaphors* are a type of frame that is concrete at first and obviously distinct from the target domain; *framing* is the use of a bundle of knowledge about the world (a source frame) to tell a story about a particular aspect of life; *evaluations* are stories that help us assess what is good or bad; *beliefs* are stories that contribute to the decision of whether a given reality is true, uncertain or false; *identities* are stories about what it means to be a particular kind of person; and *salience* and *cancellation* judge if a particular aspect of life is significant and deserving of attention. By investigating stories from an ecological point of view, and not merely from a theoretical perspective, Stibbe wants to alert us to narratives that damage the natural environment, and to identify and create new ones with a saving value (Stibbe 17).

One of the key concepts in Stibbe's ecolinguistic framework is the notion of ecological discourse analysis, which involves critically examining the language used in environmental narratives to uncover hidden assumptions, values and ideologies (Stibbe, 9). He went ahead to propose a cognitive framework that integrates the idea of stories deriving from human ecology with several theories such as critical discourse analysis. Finally, Stibbe (11-12) admonished ecolinguists to be circumspect when their own ecosophy, that is, the philosophical principles in analyzing stories on the environment in order to show the interrelatedness of man and the environment.

According to Halliday (308), when theme and information come together, they constitute the internal resources for structuring the clause as a message, that is, for giving it a particular status in relation to the surrounding discourse. He goes further to state that there are three main metafunctions of language, these are the ideational, the textual, and the interpersonal. The ideational function is the use of language to express content and to communicate information. This function involves two systems: transitivity and ergativity. In the textual function, language becomes discourse or text which, in turn, is expected to be related to itself and to its context of use (the preceding and following text) and the context of situation. Textual function can be divided into two types: thematic structure (theme and rheme) and information structure (given and new). Interpersonal function is used to establish and maintain social relations. This function involves modality: mood and residue. Since Halliday proposed the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) it has gained global acceptability among linguists and its use in the field of discourse analysis has been found appropriate for analyzing texts. As an approach, SFL pays adequate attention to the function in a text. Meanwhile, within the framework of SFL, the unit of analysis is a clause rather than the entire sentence.

Halliday says (309) stated that a language is interpreted as a system of meanings accompanied by form through which meanings can be realized and answers provided on how these meanings are expressed. According to SFL, the use of language is the result of choice and the choice is driven by meaning. The reason why a particular text experiences a particular meaning is the result of the choice of the speaker or writer. According to Halliday, SFL is appropriate to solve problems that may arise around the world. SFL is mainly concerned with how people use language to construct and interpret meaning. SFL focuses on meaning-making. It is a theory and a framework of analysis. According to Guowen (3) SFL argues that the main purpose of discourse analysis is to reveal the meaning and communicative role expressed by discourse in practical language use, with emphasis on explaining the experiential meaning, logical meaning, interpersonal meaning and textual meaning expressed in discourse from the perspective of meta-function, and finally evaluate the validity and appropriateness of the discourse.

Halliday (xvii and 303) has argued that any text is accessible to objective linguistic analysis through the categories of description for language as a whole, preferably functional and semantic in its orientation, with the grammatical categories explained as the realization of semantic patterns. In other words, language is treated as a system of meanings which has evolved out of speech encounters in which people create meaning by exchanging symbols in shared contexts of situation. By text, it means any form of interpersonal communication, world view and interpretation of experience.

The investigation of the situation focuses on three main dimensions: (a) field — what is happening? (b) tenor — who is involved? (c) mode — how is it taking place? Likewise when analyzing the text/utterance, we pose similar questions: what is happening? who is involved? how is it taking place? Corresponding to each question is a component of meaning or semantic metafunction: ideational, interpersonal and textual. Again, corresponding to each functional component is a kind of structural representation. While the three metafunctions are arguably universal, the structures which realize them are not necessarily so. SFL seeks to identify the language-specific structures that contribute to the meaning of a text. Analysis along the lines proposed by Halliday is intended to show how and why a text means what it does.

Halliday's Systemic Functional Theory, with its emphasis on exploring the semogenic ('meaning-making') power of language, provides the handle we need to understand texts as intentional acts of meaning. The goal should be to describe the grammatical resources available in language for making meaning. Meaning therefore serves as a function of the description. This study is therefore anchored on the Hallidayan approach to discourse analysis.

Analysis of news reports

In the following section, this study will analyze how the report deploys the analytical tools, including cohesion and appraisal, to reveal the Marxist ecological conception, thus, to arouse the environmental awareness of the public.

Cohesion

Cohesion is the semantic relation between one element and another in a text. A text is cohesive when the elements are tied together and considered meaningful to the reader. Cohesion occurs when the interpretation of one item depends on the other, i.e. one item presupposes the other (Halliday and Hasan, 28).

Language is used by human beings to communicate and relate their experiences. It goes to show that language does not occur in a vacuum, its use is subjected to the context in which it is used to relate the experience of the user. Armstrong (145) states that cohesion analysis is probably the most frequently used SFL analysis in this field in an effort to identify the nature of the lack of coherence often demonstrated in the

discourse of individuals with communication difficulties. On his part, Teich (114) discloses that SFL draws upon a range of existing tools supporting linguistic description, analysis and theory. Within the textual metafunction, Halliday (141) treated cohesion with its resources organized as (1) reference (2) ellipsis (3) substitution (4) conjunction (5) lexical cohesion.

Date	Page	News type	Text
July 2, 2025	5	Editorial	JOS, the Plateau State capital, is wearing a fresh new look-one that is fast becoming befitting of its long-touted moniker, ‘Home of Peace and Tourism’. For many years, deep gullies/gullies and neglected ditches such as those around the West of Mines Junction, St. Piran’s, Civil Service Club, Terminus Market and COCIN Headquarters had become permanent features of the environment. These were virtually accepted by residents as part of the natural landscape. That is, until Governor Caleb Mutfwang came on the scene with a plan to transform the city. The commencement of work on the notorious West of Mines gullies revealed years of government neglect, public misuse and a startling level of environmental degradation. The heaps of garbage excavated from the site told their own tragic story. For so long, the residents had failed to see the danger right before their eyes
June 1, 2025	12/13	Magazine	The Plateau State Government has declared war on parents and their guardians who allow their children to engage in mining activities. Governor Caleb Mutfwang, who made the declaration while reinforcing the state government’s Executive Order 001 of 2025 that temporarily banned mining in the state, said any child found in mining sites would be arrested alongside his or her parents or guardians. Though there is no official data on the number of children currently engaged in mining across Plateau State, findings by SUNDAY STANDARD revealed that children between the ages of 6 and 18 no prefer mining to school, with many claiming to earn between N5,000 and N20,000 daily. Experts also warned that the mining activities were already taking a serious toll on the environment, especially on farmlands which were destroyed and replaced with wide gullies and deep tunnels that became death traps when it rained.
May 14, 2025	12	News	The Agro-Climatic Resilience in Semi-Arid Landscapes Project (ACReSAL), a World Bank-supported initiative under the Federal Government of Nigeria, has successfully reclaimed over 178,000 hectares of degraded land across 19 northern states grappling with the effects of climate change. National Project Coordinator, Abdulhamid Umar, disclosed this to journalists on the sidelines of a five-day retreat in Lagos, describing the recovery of 178,235 hectares as a significant milestone towards achieving the Project’s six-year target of one million hectares. “This project, supported by the World Bank, addresses severe climate change challenges, particularly the encroaching Sahara desert and land degradation in the 19 northern states. Our efforts aim to reverse land infertility caused by both natural and human-induced factors in a region with increasingly erratic rainfall,” Umar explained.
April 27, 2025	12/13	Magazine	In most communities, the sight of overflowing drainages choked with discarded refuse has become an unwelcome and increasingly frequent reality. What were once intended as channels for managing rainwater and preventing flooding have, over the years, been transformed into stagnant pools. This is not accidental; it is a direct

			consequence of the careless and irresponsible practice of dumping waste into these vital waterways. This not only causes substantial property damage and economic disruption, but also poses serious safety risks to residents. Furthermore, the environmental consequences are significant. The plastic waste that dominates these blockages slowly degrades, leaching harmful chemicals into the surrounding soil and water sources and harm aquatic life, creating a ripple effect throughout the ecosystem. Regular cleaning and maintenance of drainages are vital. This proactive approach will not only improve their functionality but also help to mitigate the associated health and environmental risks. Mohammed further added, “I hope to carry out this engagement for three weeks as well as raise awareness to discourage residents from dumping refuse in the drainages”. The plight of communities facing acute water shortages is a severe humanitarian crisis with far reaching consequences. Usman Ibrahim, who actively participated in the cleaning exercise, had this to say: “We are grateful to the Councilor who called us out for general cleaning of our drainages that were blocked with refuse. It had been a bad experience when rains fall- water usually goes into people’s houses and destroys valuables. It has been quite a while since environmental sanitation is observed, but with the initiative the Councilor has taken, we urge the people to key in as a responsibility to bring the desired change. To achieve a healthy environment, this step needs a multifaceted approach of relevant organizations to achieve results. Plateau State needs to protect its scenic beauty at all times.”
April 13, 2025	3	News	Governor Caleb Mutfwang of Plateau State has appealed to all relevant authorities to prioritize forest preservation as a key strategy in the fight against banditry. Mutfwang stressed the importance of forest conservation and urged increased awareness to preserve the ecosystem while addressing the issue of desertification.
April 9, 2025	14	News	The Plateau State Environmental Protection and Sanitation Agency (PEPSA) has flagged off another round of drainage distillation within Jos-Bukuru metropolis of Plateau State. Speaking at the event, the PEPSA Director-General Samuel Dapiya, emphasized the urgency of the exercise as the rainy season approached. “This is very important because we have to clear our drainages to contain unforeseen floods and help reduce water-borne diseases as we control or maintain our environment and make it conducive for us to stay. “Therefore, I want to call on all Plateau State people to come out and support this programme , because at the end of it all, we will enjoy a clean and healthy environment,” he said. He expressed concern over the negative habit of dumping refuse and debris into drainages and waterways, which contributed to flooding. Meanwhile, the Zonal Acting Director of NESREA, Jude Appiah, has noted that climate change and global warming are consequences of human activities, stressing the need for attitudinal change.
March 9, 2025	9 & 16	Magazine	The efforts to make Plateau State one of the ten cleanest states in Nigeria has been anything but smooth. The administration has intensified efforts to ensure a cleaner environment through regular waste collection and disposal, the reintroduction of the Environmental Sanitation Day on the last Saturday of every month and public awareness campaigns on the importance of hygiene. In addition, Plateau State is promoting tree planting and conservation projects to safeguard its natural resources. Bonkat also expressed concern over the indiscriminate disposal of polythene bags, which not only deface the environment but also

			have harmful effects on the ecosystem. She stressed the need for increased public awareness on the dangers of improper waste disposal, as well as stricter enforcement of environmental regulations. These accounts reflect the broader challenges of waste mismanagement in Plateau State. While the government has made strides in tackling environmental degradation, the problem is far from solved. Effective waste management requires not just clean-up exercises but also the full implementation of waste prevention, reuse and recycling initiatives. As Plateau State grapples with the challenges of waste management, experts and environmental advocates argue that the problem can be transformed into an opportunity. The concept of waste-to-wealth has gained traction globally, with many countries adopting innovative approaches to turn waste into useful products. By promoting recycling through government-backed programmes and public-private partnerships, Plateau can significantly reduce the amount of waste dumped in unauthorized areas. Beyond environmental benefits, waste-to-wealth initiatives offer significant economic opportunities. In many countries, waste management has become a thriving industry, with entrepreneurs establishing businesses around recycling, upcycling and waste processing.
February 26, 2025	10	Editorial	The Plateau State government's decision to suspend all mining activities is a bold and necessary move to address the growing security threats and environmental destruction linked to illegal mining. The unchecked operations of illegal miners have not only fueled insecurity but have also devastated the environment. Reckless mining practices have led to deforestation, soil erosion, water pollution and land degradation, leaving vast tracts of land unfit for agriculture and other productive activities. Rivers and streams, once sources of clean water for communities, have been contaminated with toxic chemicals, endangering both human and animal life. The destruction of farmlands has further deepened food insecurity in affected areas. While security concerns are paramount, the environmental crisis caused by illegal mining must not be overlooked. The state should leverage this period to conduct a comprehensive environmental audit of all mining sites, identifying the extent of damage and developing a clear restoration plan. One crucial step is enforcing environmental regulations that have long been ignored. Many illegal miners operate with little regard for the consequences of their activities, leaving behind open pits that become death traps and polluted waterways that threaten public health. Governor Mutwang's decision to suspend mining activities is not just about security, it is also about reclaiming Plateau's future. If properly implemented, this suspension can pave the way for a safer, more regulated and environmentally sustainable mining sector.
February 23, 2025	9 & 16	Magazine	As illegal mining continues unchecked, residents of affected areas have been thrown into a state of fear and uncertainty, with many expressing concerns that their homes could collapse at any moment. Beyond Jos city, the illegal miners-driven by the lucrative tin market-have, over the past years, devastated farmlands in Jos South and Barkin Ladi local government areas. The Plateau State Government must intensify efforts to curb illegal mining, addressing unemployment and economic hardship. If left unchecked, this crisis could lead to a devastating environmental and humanitarian disasters

In the first editorial of July 2 on page 5, the writer paints a picture of what the scenario had been of the under listed areas had been before the current administration came on board. According to the writer, before the intervention, the natural was not befitting **until** Governor Mutfwang restored the glory of the affected areas which is befitting of the State as “Home of Peace and Tourism.” The use of **until** shows the change that has been witnessed, the great change due to the governor’s environmentally friendly action. In the past, there were *deep gullies, heaps of garbage* and *neglected ditches* which the residents had accepted as part of their natural environment. By contrast, the reporter reinforces the well-being brought about by the change. Therefore, the public will be influenced to maintain their green life. Similarly in the same editorial (third paragraph), the writer uses **and** to connect how the situation got to be where it was until the intervention. According to the writer, *government neglect, public misuse and...environmental degradation* were responsible.

For the June 1 edition on pages 12 and 13, the narrative is on the action taken by the Plateau State Government to outlaw illegal mining and also ban a category of people involved. The government had taken the action through the enactment of an Executive Order. Before the passage of the law, the narrative suggests that *parents and guardians* saw nothing wrong in their children participating in mining activities until the clampdown. The law stipulates arrest of both parents and children if found engaging in mining. The Governor declared the war on parents **and** their children **while** signing into law the Executive Order. This indicates that the war preceded the signing of the Executive Order in a single move by the use of subordinating conjunction, **while**. In this way, the complementary relationship of the two is revealed. In addition, through these logical and coherent statements, the statement appears powerful and convincing. We can therefore see how the chosen reports comply with Marxist ecological concept for the three illustrations.

In the April 9th news report, the reporter made use of the subordinating conjunction, **because**, twice in the third and fourth paragraphs. The effect of the use is to show the result if an action is taken. For example, the Director-General’s call on the people to observe the monthly sanitation is “... *important because we have to clear our drainages to contain unforeseen floods and help reduce water-borne diseases...*” This indicates that if the people take the initiative to clear the drains, it will reduce the possibility of floods and water-borne diseases. The use of the subordinating conjunction in the third paragraph links had had already gone in the first and second paragraphs by linking the ideas orderly.

All through the excerpts, it is glaring how the writers have deployed coordinating, subordinating and correlative conjunctions to help structure sentences and show the relationships between ideas. As per conjunctions, they are linking devices between sentences or clauses in a text. However, unlike the other grammatical devices,

conjunctions express the ‘logical-semantic’ relation between sentences rather than between words and structures (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). In other words, they structure the text in a certain logical order that is meaningful to the reader or listener. Conjunctions are divided into four types, namely *additive*, *adversative*, *causal*, and *temporal*.

From the data, the use of additive conjunctions connect units that share semantic similarity. Examples of additive conjunctions are, *and*, *likewise*, *furthermore*, *in addition*, among others which are found throughout the data. We can find them in editions of April 27th, May 14th, June 1st, and July 2nd, 2025. These kind of conjunctions are found there.

Adversative conjunctions are used to express contrasting results or opinions. This type of conjunction is expressed by words such as, *but*, *however*, *in contrast*, *whereas*. As a kind conjunction, *but* can be found in the newspaper editions of February 26th, March 9th, April 9th and April 12th.

Causal conjunctions introduce results, reasons, or purposes. They are characterized by the use of items such as, *so*, *thus*, *therefore*, *because*. For the casual conjunction *so*, its use can be found in the edition of July 2nd.

Temporal conjunctions express the time order of events such as, *finally*, *then*, *soon*, *at the same time*. However, there are no cases of temporal conjunctions as used deployed in the data. The most additive conjunction used is ‘*and*’. The classes of the conjunctions used were correctly used which have facilitated understanding of the texts.

We can therefore say that through cohesion, a better environment is envisioned, which can motivate the public to take care of their environment through actions that promote care and protection. In addition, through the use of logical and coherent statements, the reporters’ views appear powerful and convincing. We can see the chosen reports complies with Marxist ecological concept.

Appraisal

Appraisal refers to the assessment of an entity. According to Liao (322), it is judgemental on the part of the assessor whether an entity is good or bad, wrong or right. Once something is put on the scale, the thought is to measure the nobility or otherwise of an entity. Appraisal can be categorized into three compartments, namely, attitude, graduation and engagement. For the purpose of this study, it shall dwell only on attitude. Attitude is further divided into three sub types: affect, appreciation and judgement. Elaborating further, Liao (322) notes that affect describes and expresses the emotions, mood and feelings of an individual. These can

be expressed as desire (love, like) and dislike (hate, disdain). On the other hand, appreciation and judgement center on what is appraised.

According to Martin (157), appraisal theory is concerned with the way speakers convey attitudinal meaning during conversation. It deals with the way speakers communicate such attitudes as certainty, emotional response, social evaluation, and intensity. Appraisal is mainly realized lexically, although it can also be realized by whole clauses. Appraisal complements negotiation by concentrating on interpersonal resources for evaluation, including systems of attitude, engagement and graduation. Attitude focuses on systems for construing affect, judgement and appreciation (roughly the lexically realized realms of emotion, ethics and aesthetics).

In the data assembled for this study, there is an avalanche of appraisal resources and through them, the attitude or position of reader is able to be deciphered. The data collected, the resources for appraisal can be viewed from two perspectives: the relationship between human and nature and the initiatives of human beings to protect the environment. In appraising the attitudes exhibited, the study will select some typical instances to analyze implied attitudes and how they influence public awareness.

...“Therefore, I want to call on all Plateau State people to come out and support this programme, because at the end of it all, we will enjoy a clean and healthy environment,” he said(April 9).

...That is, until Governor Caleb Mutfwang came on the scene with a plan to transform the city (July 2).

Experts also warned that the mining activities were already taking a serious toll on the environment, especially on farmlands which were destroyed and replaced with wide gullies and deep tunnels that became death traps when it rained (June 1).

.... “Plateau State needs to protect its scenic beauty at all times.” (April 27).

“...Our efforts aim to reverse land infertility caused by both natural and human-induced factors in a region with increasingly erratic rainfall,” Umar explained (May 12).

The efforts to make Plateau State one of the ten cleanest states in Nigeria has been anything but smooth (March 9).

Marx and Engels have said that human beings are responsible for protecting their environment. In the extracts from the data above, the reporters have made that judgement as can be seen in the reports of April 9th, 27th and March 9th. The reporters

have vividly pointed out the roles of both the government and the citizens in this regard. In the June 1st report, the reporter has pointed out the consequences of tin mining on the environment, especially on farmlands with its devastating effects. In the March 9th report, the reporter makes a deliberate effort to point out the various measures the Plateau State Government has been putting in place to ensure the State regains its pride of place among the cleanest states in Nigeria. Consequently, the activities of human beings on the Plateau are brought to the fore and highlighted and this strikes a chord with the Marxist ecological concept.

Through the use of lexical devices and cohesive devices, the data selected for this study have revealed the cord and relationship between human beings and nature. Furthermore, through the lens of appraisal, the data are appraised and advocated and have therefore conformed to the Marxist ecological concept. There is also the revelation of the ecosophy in the texts. On public perception and awareness, the public is informed and awareness is enhanced and heightened.

Conclusion

In summary, from the analysis carried out, it can be concluded that the newspaper reports on Plateau State about the environment as extracted, have highlighted the concrete and deliberate measures put in place by the government to protect, reclaim and revitalize the environment, document the behaviors of citizens, and their responsibilities in this regard and the relationship between man and the environment. We can see from the Plateau State context that the reports are consistent with the Marxist ecological approach which can raise and improve public awareness and contribute to a state where the “land is green.”

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