



RESEARCH PAPER

Language as Ecology: A Comparative Analysis of Environmental Narratives in Khan's *Thinner Than Skin* & in Robinson's *The Ministry for the Future*

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ABSTRACT

The research unravels the interrelations between the concept of ecology and language. The study explores the environmentalism in literary fiction. The research is based on ecological narratives in Khan's *Thinner Than Skin* and Robinson's *The Ministry for the future*. A deep comparative environmental analysis is conducted to explore different language discourses in selected novels. The study aims to find out destructive, beneficial and ambivalent language discourses in order to mark the representation of ecological narratives in present study. For this regard, Stibbe's model of Ecolinguistics is employed in both selected novel. The comparative qualitative study is used as research design for following research. Through purposive sampling and content analysis techniques, ecological language discourses are analyzed. The findings of the study shows in novel *Thinner Than Skin*, destructive environmental discourse is discussed broadly, while in novel, *The Ministry for the future*, ambivalent discourse is prominent.

KEYWORDS Environment, Language Discourse, Ecological Fiction, Literary Narratives

Introduction

Environmental fiction is the main area of research discourse for examining the interconnections between language and the environment. Language as ecology is the main medium of exploration of environmental language discourses in the contemporary literary fiction. On the dynamic global sphere, language has been used as a major discussing platform to present global climate changes. The basic understandings on the existing relation between language and ecology influences people perspective towards ecological world (Stibbe, 2015). The study on natural environmental narratives has been getting intentional influence on national and international research grounds. As environmentalism regarding ecological aesthetics and destruction getting the researcher concerns on major literary and non-literary platforms. Therefore, the present research study focuses on presenting serious environmental concerns and deteriorated environmental conditions under human economic pursuits.

Environmental narratives are mainly mentioned under the term Ecolinguistics. As, ecolinguistics is the main platform for the study of relation between Language and ecology (Sapir, 1998). The concept between language and ecology broadened the exploration opportunity for uprising ecological challenges (Haugen, 1997). Language is the main tool which builds and gives shape to certain meanings, and ideologies related to particular global issue (Buell, 1998). Eco linguistics has becoming a well recognized institutionalized field for hybrid studies (Stibbe, 2015). He has a perception that Eco linguistics develop the environmental narratives through the use of language discourse. It basically makes the sense of understanding that how language portrays environmental discourses in real existing form (Song 7 & Tang, 2020).

Moreover, the term ecology widely covers the surrounding ecosystem particularly ecology, climate world, biodiversity. Ecology is the study of how organisms make interaction with each other and with natural environment around them (Lousely, 2020). It gives open-ended perspective on different environmental narratives. Ecology is mainly concerned with environmental pureness. In this aspect, language presents environmental values in true form. The interplay between language and ecology presents the real environmental essence under the language of literary fiction (Makhdoom & Rabani 2019). Eco linguistics is defined as “the study of the individualistic and societal perceptions, and interpretations about the natural world we live in” (Chin, 2016). Eco linguistics presents the true holistic framework for exploration of destructive and beneficial environmental discourse. The display of different environmental narratives under selected language discourses mark the potential about destructive environmental ideologies, and also about positive resilience ideologies. For this purpose, literary fiction adopt positive approach mainly for contributing in developing the sustainable environmental community. Literary fiction besides portraying deteriorated environmental condition around global world shows more positive perception for sustainable ecological future. Literature discourses cover most important domain which discusses high rising global concerns in broader term. In alarming ecological situation where ecological crises are rising high, literary fiction makes the possibilities for the outgrowth of eco-friendly world.

The study on environmental narratives has become an important domain for research analysis. Literature provides broader ground ecological perspectives to carry out useful dialogues for climate protection. Literary fiction provides broader environmental perspectives by the use of different language discourses, including discourse analysis, grammatical analysis, language evolution and linguistics diversity. Thus, this research is significant to highlight linguistics diversity on environmental narratives in literary fiction. As the present research study is based on Eco linguistics narratives in novels *Thinner Than Skin* & *The Ministry for the Future*. The research gap of this study is it explores the contrasting ecological narratives portrayed by Pakistani author, and American author and the choice of different language discourses in depiction of the destructive and beneficial environmental narratives under Stibbes Eco linguistics framework.

Literature Review

The wider convergence between language and environment has been developed in 190's by eco-linguistic authors. The term eco-linguistic was early introduced by Eniar Haugen, a Norwegian American Eco-literary author in 1972. According to (Alwin Fill, 1972), an eco-linguistic is an analogical metaphor, that defines the relation between ecology and language. Language has started portraying most dominant issues of the contemporary age environmental issues like deterioration of natural environment, which is a great threat to the planet (Mark Garner, 2015).

According to (Peter Muhulhusur, 2001), Language as ecology also has a similar approach in environmental discourse. Eco-linguistic is an interdisciplinary field where the researchers carried out the study of the language in relation to the Ecology (Stibbe, 2015). For the study of eco-linguistics narratives in literary fiction, language is used as discourse medium to criticise on environmental degradation and promote environmental consciousness. Language is the main driving component in order to carry out environmental studies in different literary and non-literary domains (Glottfelty, 1996). The mode of literary studies changes with the growth of language advancement. The role of language has been diverting mainly from information and communication vehicle to raising awareness about global issues (Munazzah and Yaqoob, 2019). Furthermore, Environmental studies get recognition on global platform with the change in climate stable position. The stability of language discourse got dominance during twenty first century era. Contemporary literary fiction makes the crucial ground for ecological studies (Jaiswal, 2024).

Global literary Reflections on Environmental Studies

Across the globe , literature performs significant role in narrating realistic environmental studies(Irum,2018). From Literary study bidden the mode of studies from understanding complex human-relation to their society and identical complex to the important global issues ,in which ecological crises set the mark for environmental critical studies(Buell,1995). Global literature and environment targeted on the critique perception on the exploitation of the natural atmosphere.

American Ecocritical Literature

American literary ecological study has the greater exposure in narrating destructive and sustainable environmental discourse. American literary fiction has positioned at the center of world attention because of significant portrayal of environmental narratives. The ecological boundaries were early discovered and discussed by American literary authors for environmental studies. In this aspect, Kim Stanley Robinson is well – known literary science fiction figure for eco critical narrative and Utopian vision. Related to his this specific ecological perception (Johns- Putra ,2010) examined in novel “ Science in the Capital Trilogy ”. The research actually focus on how Robinson interconnects the paths between generic environment, where post -modern modes constructs the ecological narratives. The study marks the connectivity form between language discourse, literary texts and the natural world.. The study marks that realities are not based on reader’s personal assumption and critical thought but based on the call of author’s perception selected novel employ literary environmental genre under Eco-conscious discourse. Thus, study critiques on the subjective constructive approach in presenting natural world issues. In the following novel, Robinson targeted on the disastrous climate events. Thus, the study mark that generic narrative shapes the structure of the particular ecological text themes.

Another notable research is conducted by (Kaur ,2024) for raising environmental consciousness in Rachel Carson’s study : *The Silent Spring*. The qualitative research approach shaped the environmental aspects by providing safe zone to the green world. The significant challenges faced by ecological world due to the harmful industrial practices particularly the incorporation of toxic chemical pesticides and contaminated fertilizers on the green atmosphere. The research highlights the threat put on biodiversity and other living creatures due to the use of insecticides, pesticides and fertilizers for chemical industries production. The findings of the study supports the environmental resilience and shows the concern for industrial sectors that are great challenge for ecological world and anthropocentric societal view towards green atmosphere will only cause destruction of environment.

Environmental Narratives in Pakistani Literary Discourse

Compared to India, Pakistan is regarded as South Asian’s enriched natural resources state. There is a detail vivid depiction of green mountains, glaciers, lakes, and forests enhancing the country’s presenting the natural lush green scenic atmospheric world. Pakistan’s literary study is setting the landmark by performing significant role in setting the ecological awareness discourse. For representing the ecological narrative, literary fiction platform is recognized as major contributor for environmental awareness.

The relevant significant study is carried out by (Makhdoom and Yaqoob, 2019.) The research undertaken for parallel ecological Pakistani and American fictional novels. This study work on selected novels like *Moth Smoke* (2012), *Trespassing* (2005), *White Noise* (1999) , and *A Thousand Acres* (1991). The research examines the leading language performance in constructing real environmental identities under eco-literary texts.

Pakistani and American literary authors different environmental perspectives were analyzed. In the novels like , *Moth Smoke* and *Trespassing* , toxic ecological approaches were examined. The novels frame environmental degradation by presenting the different causes of harmful pollution. Toxic air gas pollutants are dominant in the atmosphere of Lahore and Karachi. On the other hand, in American selected novels, eco- critical narrative and toxic ecological approaches like forest burn fumes, oil burn chemical industries contributing towards environmental pollution. The research finds out dominant environmental risks under the use of advanced technologies.

Ecological dilemmas have become the center of research study in literary environmental discourse. (Saeed, Bhatti and Gilani,2023) Uncovering Ecological Delima in Uzma Aslam khan's *Trespassing* novel. The study explores eco critical textual analysis in the novel. The study employs storytelling ecological themes under qualitative approach. The study frames the fragile environmental imbalances under the influence of critical human-nature relation. The research presents the ecological disharmony on Indian Ocean regions by describing threatening environment surrounded them. The study marks that the destruction of natural inhabitants for economic benefits disconnects the link between ecological world and human society.

Environmental consciousness are examined in Uzma Aslam khan's other literary novels. (Khan and Sajjal, 2024) investigated environmental concerns in khan's novel *The Geometry of God*. The research works on ecological narrative under national literary fictional narrative. The study uses qualitative methodology by selecting thematic contextual analysis. This contextual analysis helps to find out the influence of deteriorated human activities on the natural environment. The study highlights the extinction of natural species due to the unfavorable environmental conditions. Urban industrialization and economic expansion regarded as main cause of ecological pollution and ecosystem species extinction.

Material and Methods

For the present research study, the researchers have selected comparative qualitative research methodology. Hence, purposive sampling technique has been utilized to draw the relevant data. In the same way, Stibbe's (2015) Model of Eco linguistics is selected as a theoretical framework for exploring the environmental narrative in *Thinner Than Skin* and *The Ministry for the future*. Meanwhile, the data has been analyzed through close textual analysis means. The data is gathered through close content analysis means.

Results and Discussion

Environmental Narratives in Robinson's *The Ministry for the Future*

Environmental analysis of the selected novels are examined under the influence of employment of different language discourses use in selected novels. The following research study discovers the use of different language medium in Khan's *Thinner Than Skin* & in Robinson's *The Ministry for the Future* to carry out the literary discourse analysis on environmental study. The present research targets on examining the destructive and beneficial environmental discourses through the analysis of selected novels.

In Robinson's *The Ministry for the Future*, the research explore author's choice of language discourse in depiction of ecological narratives. The study explores both beneficial and destructive ecological narratives through the vivid description of climate situations of the globe. Robinson employed both dystopian and Utopian ecological perspectives by providing the broader ground for ecological exploration. Robinson picturizes the destructive climate discourse which is settled in the opening passages of the novel.

The sun cracked the eastern horizon , and it blazed like an atomic bomb, which of course it was. Solar radiation heating the skin of the face. The temperature of normal day was 38 degrees, and in Fahrenheit it was 103 degrees ,and humidity about 35 percent. A few years ago it would have been the hottest wet-bulb temperatures (Robinson, 2016, p. 2).

The following lines explain the normal day weather condition in Uttar Pradesh , with the focus on sun heat reflection. Sun heat waves has direct influence on global temperature rise and in return the fall of consequences. The heat wave discharge from sun picturizes intense heat radiations like the heat came out from atomic bomb. The heat radiations has destructive impact not only on human skin and their whole bodies but also on material belongings present in human society. The solar radiation cause the rise of normal day average temperature which is 103 degree in Fahrenheit which highlight the instability and disruption of average atmospheric events.

Round – eyed with distress and fear, red- eyed from the heat and exhaust heat smoke and dust. Metal surfaces in the sun burned to the touch, he could see heat waves bouncing over them like air over a barbeque (Robinson, 2016, p.4).

The lines define debilitating consequences of heatwave on human health condition due to the climate extremity. Extreme ecological distress mark aches of burn on individuals skin. The phrase “ round – eyed and red – eyed shows heartfelt psychological and physical human health trauma due to global climate heat crises. Environmental degradation makes the metal surfaces to touch like burning flames and inaccessible due to toxic heat waves. The ecological destructive reality mark the traumatic influences on human nerve system. Such deteriorated heatwave events take millions of life.

Humans are burning 40 gigatons of fossil carbon. Therefore, sun’s energy remain more on Earth’s surface . Temperature of 35 -wet bulb will kill humans even if they are unclothed and sitting in shade. Meanwhile , fossil fuels industries are locating 3,000 gigatons of fossil carbons. A quarter of this carbon is owned by private companies and the rest is in the possession of the nation state. (Robinson, 2016, p. 29).

The line presents the challenging vision of stable climate friendly future world. The burning of carbon coal to the air turned into the result of death of millions of people under toxic heat wave. The insignificant anti-environmental actions mark the deadly rise of wet-bulb global temperature. As World War is marked as most destructive incident regarding the death trolls including different nations and regions. But the heat stroke in India crosses the destructive historical event of World War 1. As the study shows that 3,000 fossil fuels hauls are under the control of industrial and government system. This has the deadly impact on life of human and other biodiversity as the discharge of fossil fuel turned out to be deadly toxic for the society.

Moreover, in Robinson’s novel *The Ministry for the future* also offers sustainable ecological approaches for safe environment. The resilience approach is also portrayed by Robinson to present the positive environmental measurements. The Ministry group introduces sustainable strategies to achieve the global set target for climate resilience.

If we could pump sub-glacial water out from under the glacier, the ice would thump back down onto the bedrock and slowdown to the grind it out speed that used to be normal . After that we would keep pumping out sub-glacial water out and then ice would keep grounded to the bedrock and glacier ice water would stick to the normal speed.(Robinson, 2016, p.120, 121)

The novel presents the possibilities of saving the world by taking the actions on international climate management organizations protocols. During 29th COP meeting, the delegation emphasized on target of achieving the elimination of carbon fossil fuels. For

greater actions. subsidiary body was introduced with the name of *The Ministry for the future* with the aim of reducing carbon emission to the atmosphere and settle down climate heat severity conditions in developing regions. The Ministry set the goal of putting sanctions on the state who contributed more in releasing carbon and fossil coils. The Ministry group focuses on actions like introducing and implementing carbon coining and geoengineering approaches to control climate disasters events.

Carbon coins are the best opportunity to go long ever created. Almost Kind of sure thing. So, craziness of time was good for investors. Those who had shorted fossil fuels and gone long on clean renewable are now making fortunes and fortunes require reinvestments to actually be fortunes. Growth ! Growth! (Robinson , 2016, p. 345).

The carbon -coining and installation of geo-engineering and technological advancements have great strong impact for achieving the desired standard of utopian future. The geological and carbon coining experiments can protect the energy of natural world and also employ the safe ecological world. As the selected novel mainly propose the dreadful actions of carbon emissions into the air due to which the atmosphere has become toxic destructive place to survive. The Ministry group first focused on purifying the environment from poisonous carbon release. An approach of "Carbon Coining" was introduced to international bodies by Ministry group to end the toxic layers of greenhouse carbon gases from the atmosphere.

Sustainable way to generate energy from ocean of Antarctic current in a way by rotating and moving the heat currents of Antarctic around continent like a belt , in clockwise form and of course it gets channelized through the Drake passage, if electricity could be produced from the faster sections of the current (Robinson, 2016, p. 257).

Moreover, renewable energy sources are introduced in the novel by Robinson for achieving the target of pure ecological world. Renewable energy system is mostly installed for electricity generating process, as the climate -friendly countries are diverting their mode of interest towards renewable energy sources like ocean energy tides, wind rain system that is more ecological resilient and anti-pollutant. Installing renewable electrical energy systems seems great anti-agent against atmospheric pollution, therefore, ecologist are promoting the sustainable ways of producing renewable energy.

Environmental Narratives in Khan's *Thinner Than Skin*

Uzma Aslam khan's *Thinner Than Skin* is widely recognized as eco-fictional novel. In khan's novel , nature is described as the central notion for world attention. The study analyzes destructive environmental discourse and beneficial environmental discourse in selected novel. The study mainly focuses on the ecological atmosphere of northern regions like kagan Valley, Hunza Valley, Naran Valley, different glaciers, lakes.. The research uncovers the dark realities of northern ecological hemisphere that how industrial sectors, territory clashes, worldly economic benefits pose threat on real ecological integrity.

Khan's novel talks destructive ecological discourse through environmental exploitation under the influence of global warming. Khan's critique on environmental violation. The climate changes or global warming deteriorates the existence of natural landscapes like glaciers, rivers, forests, green atmosphere. The dispersed heat over the region of northern area show that the global warming situation is seeming as hard challenge to cover, as areas where average temperature remains cool is now getting hotter day by day due to the unbalanced climate changes. The characters deeply analyze the contemporary situations of glaciers mating which cross the average temperature limit mainly during summer season. The ratio of glacier ice mating increases after the emergence of global climate crises. " It was the snowmelt of the two peaks that created the lake where she now paused . The melt had been two strong this year, obsessive even. (Khan,2012,p. 4)." The

above lines portray the underlying ratio of snow melt of two dominant peaks that are Nanga and Malaika Parbat. The character Maryam through her ecological experience and observation puts light on the condition of climate degradation. As the glacier mountain peaks are covered under blankets of dusts, and chemical pollutants. The glacier impurities are the end result of wasteful industrial discharge. The rapid increase in climate heat temperature cause the glaciers top to melt in a rapid speed. This is caused by abrupt global climate temperature rise, due to which climate patterns get disturb around the globe. With the rapid rise in climate temperatures, the patterns of glacier matings are falling at rapid rate.

Glaciers in the eastern Himalayas are receding. Some says the Alps will be ice – free by 2100 . Greenland’s glaciers are melting so fast they could sink southern California and Bangladesh . But in some parts of Pakistan , glaciers could be expanding (Khan,2012,p.46).

The novel reflects the complex ice glacier pattern, mainly the glaciers of Eastern and Southern Hemispheres. Global warming directly influences the life span and health of glaciers. Therefore, glaciers of Alps, and Greenland are shrinking at higher ratio. Such rapid rise in glacier ice speed could pit threat on the water level of California and Bangladesh. This turned out to be a disaster in the form of floods, and hurricanes. Moreover, glacier ice melting is the main factor of rising the rate of green gases emission into the surrounding atmosphere. When glacier ice liquifies, it releases carbon gases at rapid range. In this way, carbon gases directly move towards the ecological sphere by disrupting the climate balanced patterns. Thus, we can say that glaciers and global are directly intensifying the climate imbalance.

Furthermore, Maryam while depicting the complexities of local nomads who are bound by natural disasters due to the global warming situation. Such natural disasters create more pathetic situation for different forest land. According to Maryam “ The field has been rotten because the land was easily destroyed in the floods during the previous year. The land was easily destroyed because it has no trees ” (Khan, 180). These lines portray the complex climate influence on green forest lands. Pakistan has a higher rate of Maryam criticizes on the involvement of powerful establishment groups on the matters of deciding the future of northern regions. The insignificant approach for worldly benefits cause the annihilation of natural forests. Deforestation has been regarded as most uprising environmental concern for Pakistan. Climate pattern change put great catastrophic impacts on ecological biospheres particularly forests.

Uzma Aslam Khan takes the ground of literary narratives to give views on beneficial environmental discourse. In *Thinner Than Skin*, the positive environmental discourse is presented under the limelight of northern ecological serenity of Pakistan. The environmental beauty is appraised through the depiction of beauty of mountains, glaciers, rivers, and green forests land. Khan presents the northern ecological world with admiration and serenity. In the midway of the novel, Khan defines the beauty of snowmelt lakes in a way “It was the snow melt of the two peaks that created the lake” (Khan,2012,p. 2). The above example presents natural ecological system by making connection between glacier snow melting and lake formation. The melted glacier snow facilitated the lakes of the rivers by linking the path for the irrigation of the lake area. This is natural phenomenon which supports ecological balance, this provides the ray of surveillance for biosphere world. Under balanced harmony between natural ecosystem and human world, the sustainable and human friendly environment can be achieved.

The Environmental landscape serenity lightens up the balanced human relation with environment for the protection of geological landscapes. In the selected novel, Nadir during her kagan Valley journey discusses about the natural majesty of green ecological world. He explained the splendid green landscapes in the words:

It's a lush alpine forest and you love the lush alpine forests. It has glaciers, it gives more time together, you will love the cabin, it's by the river and we will have the time for the lakes (Khan, 2012, p.32).

The above lines demonstrate the serenity of lush green landscapes of Kagan and Naran valley. It associates human affection and their attraction towards ecological beauty. The regions of Hunza, Naran are the tourists' spotlight areas where they experience tall green trees, slopy-curved mountain heights, lush alpine forests, lake side aesthetic view. Nadir mesmerizes the undefined beauty of Pakistani northern landscapes. As, on the hilly areas of Pakistan, the lush alpine landscapes are the main spot of attraction for the tourists. The phrase lush green valley depicts the vivid imagery of green forests land, the beauty of green atmospheric world surrounded by lush green trees, plants, and vegetation. The more one can get soothing calm environment around lake or river side and natural beauty reflects human mind towards pure living styles. The beauty of lake or river side dominates the natural water flow system developing the sense of calamity. Such appraising tone for ecological beauty shows the use of beneficial environmental discourse.

Discussion

The following research study demonstrated the environmental narratives in Khan's novel *Thinner Than Skin* and Robinson's novel *The Ministry for the future*. The study marks significant contribution of use of beneficial environmental discourse and destructive discourse. In the selected novels, the use of language discourse has marked for the increasing environmental threats and also raising environmental consciousness for healthy living. The findings of the study show Robinson has used more concerning remarks on the rising threats on human environment due to the world global warming issue. However, beside destructive ecological discourse, the study finds Robinson concern for stable climate world. This is presented by using the beneficial discourse. Language of hope and Surveillance is used by Robinson in the form realistic climate safety measurements.

On the other hand, in novel *Thinner Than Skin*, Khan framed the ecological world under destructive and beneficial use of language discourse. Under concerning tone, Khan emphasizes on ecological challenges of Northern landscapes of Pakistan. The industrial development sectors are seen as emerging challenge or threat for the northern natural world. Terrorists' actions and humans' insignificant approaches for economic success have put the red zone label on ecological purity of the mountain regions. Khan also uses positive language discourse by evaluating the beauty of green valleys. The intimation of love between two prominent mountain peaks is portrayed in exceptional way. Environmental beauty is presented through the use of beneficial discourse.

Conclusion

By summarizing the following research study, environmental discourses are discovered in *The Ministry for the future* and *Thinner Than Skin*. Both authors marked environmental consciousness through the use of destructive and beneficial discourses. However, in Robinson's novel, ambivalent discourse is seen prominent which focused more on raising environmental consciousness. In contrary, the dominant discourse which is found out is destructive discourse. Thus, both novels mainly call attention for the preservation of ecological world. The environmental discourse which is ambivalent, and destructive is analyzed by framing and assessment procedure.

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