

**ANTHROPOMORPHIC LANGUAGE USE FOR
ERASURE: AN ECOLINGUISTIC STUDY OF
WILDLIFE TV SHOW ‘*MEATEATER*’**

BY

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Candidate of **Master of Philosophy** at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis **Anthropomorphic Language Use for Erasure: An Ecolinguistic Study of Wildlife TV Show 'MeatEater'** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of MPhil degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

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ABSTRACT

Title: Anthropomorphic Language Use for Erasure: An Ecolinguistic Study of Wildlife TV Show ‘*MeatEater*’

Anthropomorphism is a technique through which human qualities and emotions are attributed to non-human entities e.g gods, plants or animals. The present study attempts to highlight the usage of anthropomorphic and anthropocentric language and to unveil the hidden phenomenon of Erasure in the wildlife TV show ‘MeatEater’ under the model of Ecolinguistic Discourse Analysis. Moreover, with the help of the theory of Erasure, this research aims to highlight the indifference of man towards nature, ecosystem and wildlife. This indifference is often identifiable in the wildlife documentaries and films where the natural behavior of animals is frequently overlooked. The study identifies and measures the gendered pronouns using ‘AntConc’ and highlights the ‘Anthropocentric’ constructs with the help of textual evidence bringing out the three types of erasure namely, the trace, the mask and the void in the selected sample. The study further elicits the detailed analysis of different forms and levels of erasure explaining how the natural world is presented in a distorted fashion. The findings of the study show the anthropocentric lexical choices of the speaker including the gendered pronouns (He, she) along with the anthropomorphic adjectives and verbs. The present study proposes a workable solution to the identified problem through the concept of ‘Ecosophy’ by suggesting the idea of creating a harmonious relationship between humans and the natural world. It further underscores the significance of the conservation of wildlife for a healthy and prosperous environment with a better future for the silenced and marginalized non-human entities in a man-driven world.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EDA Ecolinguistic Discourse Analysis

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved parents and my dear friend (Late) Mr. Wail Muhammad.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Modernization has revolutionized the world globally. New cultures have emerged, standards of living have improved but only for humans because they have been overusing the natural resources for their comfort and luxury. This has led to many environmental issues such as global warming, climate change and extinction of many animal species because of hunting (Wiedmann et al., 2015 as cited in Manfredo, 2020). Manfredo (2020) further points out that modernization has brought a shift in attitudes and the idea of the sustainability of nature is now replaced by domination. Resultantly, this world has become a place where humans dominate the non-human and represent them as something of their use only. Inglehart & Welzel (2005) support the view and argue that modernization has diminished human social affiliation and given rise to the self-expression needs. This has gone to the extent that humans, whenever they get to interact with these non-human objects, use a language which almost humanizes them by attributing human qualities to them, and human language which is impregnated with a huge stock of words and expressions used to convey feelings, emotions and the physical and mental state humanizes animals because the human language depicts the world from a human point of view (Sealey & Oakley, 2013). This phenomenon is referred to as ‘Anthropomorphism’ and it can take many forms such as the use of metaphors or pronouns, adjectives etc. Anthropomorphism can be used to refer to gods and objects as well by attributing human qualities to them. This domination over the non-human entities through the use of language allows the benefits to float with the dominant human group and negative consequences to rest with the subordinate group i-e the animals (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Recently, attention has been given to participants who are repressed, backgrounded, omitted or erased from the texts. Guthrie (1997) argues that

modernization, scientific advancement and a promoted luxurious lifestyle has promoted anthropomorphic thinking and strangled human affiliation with wildlife. Unlike the human society where domination over another human is often considered offensive and cruel, animals have been facing this domination since the beginning of time. They've been treated as inferior beings by being kept in bondage for human display, being killed for lavishing meals and being enslaved in work situations like lifting weights and transport etc. Adcroft (2010) is of the view that the psychological distance between humans and non-human entities has dehumanized animals. Humans misrepresent animals in their perception and it would not be wrong to say that humans visualize everything around them in a language which represents everything present in the universe from a human point of view. This clearly shows the lustful desire of human civilization of capturing and controlling the whole natural system. It makes all other things either living or non-living become secondary. It is most dominantly used to misrepresent animals and the analogies made between humans and animals often makes animals deprived of their right of individuality (Adcroft, 2010).

Anthropomorphic and Anthropocentric expressions are apparent in the media (films, documentaries and books) written by humans on the animal kingdom (Adcroft, 2010). Media plays a very important role in keeping everyone updated about the various events around the world (Alden, 2004). A vast majority of people, all across the world, rely upon various sources of media for keeping themselves updated on various ongoing issues around the world. One of the most used media applications nowadays is Netflix which is a platform that provides access to 4k streaming of countless movies, dramas and documentaries. As claimed by the Netflix original, the audience for this media varies from teenagers and adults to youngsters and senior citizens. Adults and youngsters being naive and passionate get highly moved by these films and the T.V shows they watch which play a great part in shaping their mentality and designing the ways and approaches they have towards the world, society and its norms. The fact that youngsters are being highly affected by this show can be validated looking at the rating of the show i-e 4.6/5 according to the viewers that are mostly adults. The use of anthropomorphic language has long been treated as a controversial topic among people of different beliefs and has grabbed the attention of many discourse analysts. There are two different schools of thought. The first covers the people who understand anthropomorphism as a mere source of making analogies

between humans and animals and the second covers the ones that perceive it as a way of suppressing animals by making false homologous comparisons with the humans who make comparisons based on unjustified similarities. These comparisons may be social, mental, or physical. Physical anthropomorphism relates back to the era when Greeks made comparisons between humans and animals giving them names of gods and deities making it less controversial and problematic. Mental, psychological or emotional anthropomorphism refers to the attribution of a human-like mind or feelings to animals (Adcroft, 2010).

Knowledge about animal life carries a tension because it inherits both the Cartesian conviction that humans and animals are distinct species and the Darwinian belief that both lineages have evolved together (King, 1996). The legacy of differing ideas about the connection between animals and humans means that the problem of animal cognition whether confirmed or contested, celebrated or ignored, will always be at the forefront of behavioral studies and by producing representations of animal life, societies around the world will always be engaged in the argument about animal consciousness or animal mind (Ryder, 1989). This understanding of animal life in behavioral thought ranges from Charles Darwin's writings to naturalists of the late 1800s to works by ecologists and socio-biologists of today (King, 1996; Pierson, 2005).

The basic cause of argument within this field of study is the replacement of animals from their natural context and their placement into a setting totally unknown to them (Wynne, 2007). He further says that humans have been experimenting on animals, mainly the chimpanzees and apes, putting them in settings where they would have to behave like humans. Several attempts have been made to make these animals talk in human language. Cultural anthropomorphism is also questionable in nature as it represents animal culture from a human point of view which deteriorates its original nature. We can also consider Darwin's theory of Evolution as an example of cultural and physical anthropomorphism which made huge comparisons between animals and humans (Ryder, 1989). Anthropomorphism and sentimentality were both commonly used in the twentieth century to belittle those who treated nonhuman animals as solely appropriate for humans. The words 'anthropomorphism' and 'sentimentality' did not enter the narrative until after Darwin's day. As far-fetched as it may seem, it could be argued that the animal exploiters had measures to protect themselves from the

damaging logical implications of Darwinism (Ryder, 1989, p.164) Hence, we can conclude that within the history of nonhuman animal welfare, discourses about nonhuman animal rights and the myth of anthropomorphism are intertwined. When the renewed defense of nonhuman animal rights and moral philosophy separated from the pejorative label of anthropomorphism in the 1970s, it became important to recognize. The inclusion of anthropomorphic representations of animals in Disney wildlife films was derided as inaccurate and unrealistic, and similar charges could be levelled at many other early 20th century commercials and popular fiction pieces. Following this configuration, tensions emerged between popular culture and science when it came to constructing nonhuman animal representations (Adcroft, 2010).

‘Anthropomorphism’ should be viewed as a functional method of understanding otherness (Doniger, 2005 as cited in Karlsson, 2012). He goes on to say that the comparisons made totally depend upon the non-human entity that is being compared and it should only be considered an intellectual sin if the comparisons are led by anthropocentrism that gives humans the permission of exploiting other species by making them the only superior beings. The distinction between why and how these comparisons are made needs to be clarified. Various linguists (Sealey & Oakley, 2013; Somerville et al., 2021; Elliot, 2001) have tried to cover the positive aspect of ‘Anthropomorphism’ i-e how it develops a bond of affiliation between the humans and the non-human animals. However, a limited amount of work has been done on the negative outcome of anthropomorphism which is a gap that the present study aims to fill. The current study unveils some of the anthropomorphic expressions used in the Netflix original series ‘*MeatEater*’. The show is observed to be full of anthropocentric constructs and the fact that it is readily available to be viewed by anyone who has the subscription for the Netflix app makes it important to bring to light its anthropocentric nature. If left neglected, it can lead to young minds developing a biased approach towards nature which can ultimately strangle the affiliation of humans with the natural world. The present study is concerned with how animals are depicted through language use. A quick look at the various writings (Sealey & Oakley, 2013; Somerville et al., 2021; Elliot, 2001) provides evidence to support the claim that language is not simply a useful and neutral tool for inquiry, but has a crucial influence on how animals are portrayed. As various animal-related studies were examined, It was found that most of them focus on the natural behavior of animals, but view those

animals' lives in dramatically different ways. When the two representations that reflect different ideas about animals are compared, their relative objectivity becomes a question. The very question of objectivity in the understanding of animals is the central theme of this work.

When discussing animal life, one can make knowledge seem more or less technical in terms of ordinary language (Elliot, 2001). Conversation, both ordinary and technical, happens in daily human affairs. Linguistic mediums give different answers to the question of how we perceive animal life. Intrinsic, experiential perspective conveys an understanding of animals as actors and actors as individuals. Technical language, on the other hand, goes one step further by conceptualizing animals as objects that are part of the natural world, giving conceptual thoughts. Animal epistemology denies the existence of animal minds and tends to oppose the view that animals have experiences (Sealey & Oakley, 2013). The technical language so convincingly formulates a perspective on animal behavior as being irrelevant to scientific knowledge about it. Often, animals' behavior is dictated by their physical needs, with no thought of self-preservation. The dissonance between ordinary language and technical terminology gives us a chance to appreciate the centrality of language in animal portrayal (Adcroft, 2010). A variety of theoretical frameworks exist to assist researchers investigating animal behavior. The present study however uses the theory of 'Erasure' by Stibbe (2015) using EDA (Eco-linguistic Discourse Analysis) as the method of data analysis and the theory of 'Ecopsychology' by Fisher (2002) which allows the researcher to theoretically stand against the monopoly of humans against animals and nature as a whole and suggests possible solutions to the ecological and environmental problems. It further helps humans understand their relationship with other species in the universe, promoting the idea of environmentalism and sustainability where the detrimental human activities and evil treatment of the environment at the hands of humans is challenged through a reassessment of humanity's relationship with nature. This would somehow prove that the non-human entities existing in the natural world are worthy of consideration. Writings about animal behavior are meant to intrigue and involve the reader or it can be said that language is a medium of travel for the readers, a mechanism for looking at animal life (Adcroft, 2010). The present research is primarily concerned with the issues and intricacies of language usage such as the varying and subtle usage of

concepts, grammar, the structure of sentences, various modes of description, the logic of explanation, and qualifiers. A variety of techniques are applied in behavioral texts which could be compared to maps used by the reader as they navigate through the fields of animal life.

1.2 Thesis Statement

Humans use anthropomorphism to look at nature through the lens of anthropocentrism in order to bring the non-human entities (mainly the animals) into their kingdom of consideration and understanding. This removal of the animals from their natural context and their placement in a human paradigm distorts the reality of the natural world. Humans use language as a weapon to promote the idea of ‘human superiority’ and to employ shallow reasons to cover every heinous crime they commit. ‘Hunting’ when euphemized and twisted as a ‘Game’ doesn’t sound very barbaric, rather sounds quite normal. This play of words promotes the ‘Anthropocentric’ mindset that needs to be challenged. Animal behavior should be understood and they should be represented as individual entities since they are totally different from humans and have a justifiable behavior of their own that shouldn’t be humanized. The current study aims to highlight the hidden phenomenon of erasure led by the anthropocentric constructs in the wildlife tv show ‘*MeatEater*’ using EDA.

1.3 Research Objectives

- To explore the anthropomorphic lexical choices (pronouns, verbs and adjectives) made by the speaker that reflect anthropomorphism.
- To measure the frequency of the anthropomorphic lexical choices and to explain why these lexical choices matter.
- To investigate the existence of different types of ‘Erasure’ in the selected sample and to analyze the identified instances using EDA.
- To analyze the audience feedback on ‘MeatEater’ published on IMDb original to inspect the potential of anthropomorphic language on the mindsets of the masses.

1.4 Research Questions

- 1) What anthropomorphic lexical choices are made by the speaker in the TV show *Meateater*?

- 2) What is the frequency of each anthropomorphic pronoun and what role does the use of anthropomorphic language play in producing an anthropocentric effect?
- 3) How does this use of anthropomorphic language represent the animals killed for meat as an exploitable commodity promoting Erasure?

1.5 Significance of Research

The present research does not only promote the scientific and educational value of this area but also helps the general public in understanding how and why humans have been treating animals as a commodity and exploiting them for their selfish needs or mere fun. It further unfolds the mistreatment of animals at the hands of the humans and how they are taken out of their natural context and presented through the lens of human understanding just for the sake of public entertainment. It also helps us humans understand our own place in this diverse universe and connect with the non-human entities that exist in nature. It not only aids us in becoming close to the realities of wildlife, but also allows nature to become a vital part of our life by creating empathy for animals that are usually considered low, dull, exploitable and subordinate to humans. This research further proves to be significant for the young researchers who intend to explore new areas within the field of linguistics.

1.6 Rationale of the study

It has always been a goal in wildlife documentaries and cinema to offer both scientific and entertaining information to the audience. Critics have repeatedly said that using anthropomorphic approach is a fast and simple way to increase profit and ratings by evoking strong emotions and exploiting shock value (Mitman, 1993; Bouse, 1998; Mitman, 1999; King, 1996; Bouse, 2000; Mitman & Porter, 2005). The critique of “ratings-driven” programming is particularly prevalent in this setting (Bouse, 2000; Pierson, 2005; Kilborn, 2006). Criticized as “entertainment” and lacking scientific or instructional value, popular animal programs focus on overly anthropomorphized constructs. Very limited research has focused on the question of whether anthropomorphism has the ability to manipulate the masses. This research aims to shift the way people think about anthropomorphism, and it focuses on two specific aspects of it: why and how people anthropomorphize animals on films, and to

better comprehend the concept of anthropomorphism's ability to influence the minds of the audience (making them believe that have a right to exploit the animals). The present research further aims to highlight the concept of 'nature sustainability' by bringing humans together with the characters and animals on the screen, and transform people's environmental values.

1.7 Delimitations

This research analyzes the wildlife documentary genre and the anthropomorphic language used in the Netflix original series 'MeatEater'. It has taken only the lexical choices (Pronouns, Verbs and Adjectives) into consideration. Only these pronouns are considered for analysis (He, She and They). The present study is delimited to the identification of the hidden phenomenon of 'Erasure' in the selected sample and how it manipulates the mindsets of the masses. It does not concern the positive side of anthropomorphism i-e how it helps humans build a strong bond of affiliation with animals. It also does not suggest the substitute for the anthropomorphic constructs rather is limited to highlighting the negative outcomes of the anthropocentric constructs and why they should be challenged.

1.8 Organization of the study

The present research covers the following chapters, each with its own set of details.

- Introduction
 - This chapter of the study provides a detailed background, statement of problem, objectives of the study, research questions, rationale of the study and the delimitations.
- Literature Review
 - This chapter reviews the variables related to the study in a hierarchical order and develops a link between those variables. It further reviews the work already done in the domain of Ecolinguistics.
- Research Methodology
 - This chapter provides a detailed insight of the theoretical and analytical framework of the study along with the data analysis tools and the data analysis procedure.

- Data Analysis
 - This chapter includes the evaluation and analysis of the selected sample under the light of the chosen theoretical framework.
- Conclusion
 - This chapter comprises the research findings, discussion and suggestions for the future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of the literature present in the respective field of study. It streams the major components of the study to the previous work done in the relevant field.

2.1 Variables Related to the Study

Following variables are critical to the present study. They have been placed in a hierarchical order to help the readers maintain a flow between the variables and to draw a better relationship between them.

2.1.1 Language

Oxford Learners Dictionary defines language as “words and the ways in which they are put together in order to articulate thoughts” and “a method of communication involving spoken words and written texts that is employed by humans”. However, language isn't only used for communication; it's a powerful tool for expression as well. It has a role and purpose that lies far beyond the boundaries of mere communication. According to the International Forum of Indigenous Languages (2019) our ability to communicate, define our identity, express our history and culture, and learn, all comes down to language. Through language, people are able to preserve the history, customs, and traditions of their community, as well as their memory, unique modes of thinking, and many other important qualities. “Language influences thought and emotion, determining one's perception of reality” (Whorf, 1929). His fellow linguist Sapir (1929) states that “Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor do they live in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are instead totally reliant on the language they use to communicate their daily activities.” Their views are supported by Banga (2015) and Kotamraju (2018) who say that people have found ways of expressing their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs no matter what the restrictive society might be. Words are created continually in order to name a new concept. We use language while we converse, read, and write, drive, trade, and engage in numerous socializing activities (Kotamraju, 2018). He further says that in order to better understand life, one must

also become better acquainted with language. The basic function of language is the communication of ideas, concepts, facts, and various types of information between individuals belonging to the same community, nation, or cultural tradition. Language has a great role to play in shaping our personality because it is what separates us from the rest of the species. Keeping this in mind it is highly unfair to draw similarities between humans and animals using human language which views the world from the human perspective only (Banga, 2015).

According to the Linguistics department of the University Of California (2021), “language is a phenomenon that is complex and layered beginning with the sounds that speakers make and extending to the concepts those sounds symbolize.” Language keeps on growing and evolving over time and hence there is a field devoted to studying the science of language itself i-e “Linguistics”.

2.1.1.1 Linguistics

The Linguistic Society of America (2021) defines linguistics as the scientific investigation of the structure and development of human language, and it can be applied to a wide range of human activities. Linguistics emphasizes theoretical approaches to language structure, variation, and use; describes and documents contemporary languages; and explores how language structure and theories of language impact human behavior, culture, and learning and teaching.

In an effort to better understand how people understand language, what cognitive processes they use, and how this knowledge varies across speakers and regions, the field of linguistics has been designed (Linguistics, 2021). Linguistics offers various tools, methods, and approaches to study texts, contexts and different phenomena from a specific point of view. There are many sub-fields within linguistics: Neuro and Psycholinguistics, Sociolinguistics and Ecolinguistics etc.

2.1.1.1.1 Ecolinguistics

‘Ecolinguistics’ is self-naming and the components of ‘ecology’ and ‘linguistics’ are its two distinct components. German biologist Ernst Haeckel (1901) made the word "ecology" famous over a century ago when he defined it as "the study of how different organisms and their surroundings interrelate, including those of the same and different species." Despite this, it is not a definition; or at least, it fails to

properly define several topics says Dash (2019). In fact, there are studies which have shown that since the 1990s, Ecolinguistics has developed into a newly formed academic discipline (LeVasseur, 2014; Stibbe, 2015; Chen, 2016; Wenjuan, 2017 & Fill, 2018). Dash (2019) further says that while the words “eco” and “ecology” mean the study of the environment, “eco” has a greater meaning because it relates to ecology, while “linguistics” signifies a scientific study of the language. Ecolinguistics on the surface appears to be concerned with how language relates to ecology. If readers are not provided with relevant background information, they may lose themselves in the debate of whether ecolinguistics is the ecological study of language or a linguistic study of ecology or even in considering if one is the other (Zhao, 2017).

Studies of language interaction and diversity, studies of texts such as signposts that are outdoors, analyses of texts about the environment, studies of how words in a language relate to local objects, studies of the mix of languages surrounding pupils in multicultural schools, studies of dialects in paris, etc., have all been described as 'ecolinguistics' by researchers (Derni, 2008). If we look at the description provided by Fill (1993), Ecolinguistics is the study of language in relation to the environment. Haugen (1992) says that Ecolinguistics has grown in many directions since Halliday (1901) first raised his concerns, using many linguistic frameworks and techniques for exploring language in an ecological setting. Ecologists have said that this discipline studies the various ways that humans, other species, and the environment interact to perpetuate their own existence (Haugen, 1972). The first goal of ecolinguistics is to establish systems of linguistic ideas that hold people not just to their responsibilities as members of society, but also to their responsibilities as part of the ecosystems that life depends on. The second goal however is to illustrate how the study of linguistics may help with challenges like climate change and biodiversity loss, which describes the connection between species (including humans) and their physical environment. Both these goals are critical to the present study and are further supported by the ideas of Stibbe (2015) who says that, 'Ecology' is understood in many different ways, ranging from a very wide term such as "the interaction of certain things with other things" to a more limited idea such as "connected to environmentalism".

An additional facet of ecolinguistics is linguistic variety and the integration in local languages of traditional ecological knowledge. In the book 'The Spell of the Sensual: Perception and the Language in a Most Human World' David Abram (1996)

described how expanded ecology forms language in oral cultures. This fact is supported by Fill (2002) who believes that people in literate cultures have been increasingly removed from the natural world to the point that their connection to the land is impeded by their increased involvement with language. He further adds that, as dominant languages like English spread over the world, environmental skills inherent in local cultures are lost. Clearly, Ecolinguistics is in favor of biodiversity, linguistic diversity, and cultural diversity, and it is critical of texts, narratives, and discourses that hurt or threaten language, culture, and the planet (Abram, 1996). When it comes to language, vocabulary and how thoughts are expressed, ecolinguistics assumes that language has a direct or indirect impact on nature. It can lead to forest degradation or reforestation, animal and bird species' extinction or conservation (Fill, 2002). About language, culture, and environment, ecolinguistics thinks that people's opinions about these things are shaped by the stories they live by i-e it examines the function of language in the development of ecological and environmental problems and their possible solutions (Stibbe, 2015). When it comes to ecology, ecolinguistics is all about promoting healthy discourse analysis and criticising environmentally detrimental language. It dismantles anthropocentric linguistic usages that give humans the right to destroy or dominate other species (Abram, 1996).

Ecolinguistics has two primary interests: it concerns both human language and the language of nature. Both these concerns have been addressed by the present research and the language constructs that go against the wellbeing of 'ecology' have been highlighted using "Ecolinguistic Discourse Analysis" which is also called 'The Ecological Analysis of Language'. It is explained in detail in the section below.

2.1.1.1.1 Ecolinguistic Discourse Analysis

Ecolinguistics looks at the connection between language and the environment, and grows the environment and language (Derni, 2008). In ecolinguistics, the written and spoken language of a community is critically analyzed, and its relationship to the surrounding environment is explored. This type of examination can be done on a global or local level by analyzing the different words used in several local dialects to name the same plant species (EuroTrad, 2021). Identifying the ideas that shape our interaction with our environment in certain socio-political circumstances is the

emphasis of the former. Ecolinguistics has recently focused on 'unmasking' capitalism's exploitative relationship with the world's ecosystem, which encourages populations to engage in unfettered consumption. Consumerism (i.e., the continual production and consumption of commodities) can be 'good' for the environment, but also 'bad' for the environment (Nordquist, 2019). He further says that, Political and commercial communication conceals this phenomenon on a more or less subconscious level. 'Ecolinguistic Discourse Analysis' teaches people how much and how deeply ideologies affect our interaction with the environment (Derni, 2008, as cited in Dash, 2019).

EDA focuses on discourse and opinion regarding the sustainability of the environment, as well as whether certain discourses are beneficial to or negatively impact the environment. It condemns the use of words that affect the environment or animal habitat (Dash, 2019). This domain entails a spectrum of topics such as climate change, conservation, and ecosystem damage, as well as language preservation, cultural degradation, and celebration of sustainability. To learn about the importance of language for the ecosystem, Ecolinguistics provides the required instruments (Derni, 2008, as cited in Dash, 2019).

Wu (2015) on the other hand, defines Ecolinguistic discourse analysis as the process of analyzing discourses and applying a normative framework that incorporates both humans and the fact that humans are part of a broader community of life. According to Stibbe (2014), while Ecolinguistics follows in the footsteps of traditional critical discourse studies by utilizing the same sorts of linguistic analysis, the normative framework within which it operates includes consideration of human relationships not just with other humans, but also with the ecological systems that all life depends on. This stance is further supported by Dash (2019) who says that, "Ecologically harmful behavior and finding positive behaviors for the natural world are scrutinized by ecolinguistics, a type of critical discourse analysis that seeks to identify ecolinguistic discourses that inspire respect and care for the environment. Ecologically based normative frameworks for appraising discourses and their impact on non-human subjects as well as on future generations are necessary in order to account for both human and non-human subjects." While the notion of ecolinguistics does revolve around fresh frameworks to criticize or analyze texts and discourses, it's

a kind of critical discourse analysis as opposed to other analytical approaches (Chen, 2016, as cited in Dash, 2019).

EDA analyzes language in ecological terms to unveil certain ‘worldviews’ and the ‘stories we live by’ (Stibbe, 2015). Every person, every community, every species has the cognitive structures of stories to which they adhere, these cognitive structures, called stories, govern how they treat others, other animals, plants, forests, rivers, and the environment says Stibbe (2015). EDA addresses the stories in people’s minds from an ecological perspective, within an ecological framework (or ecosophy). Either way, they are expected to either support people's desire to maintain vital ecosystems, or serve as a force that encourages destructive conduct (Stibbe, 2014). An alternative approach to storytelling is the subject of ecolinguistics, which aims to make a positive impact over the world by opposing the toxic stories and generating new stories people can follow (Stibbe, 2015).

To uncover the hidden assumptions and messages, Ecolinguistic Discourse Analysis was applied to texts about the environment and environmentalism, beginning with the texts, in order to reveal hidden assumptions and messages and analyze how effective these are in achieving environmental aims, such as promoting environmental causes (Harré et al., 1999). As a result, analysis which are applicable to any discourse that could have long-term impacts on ecosystems, such as neoliberal economic discourse or discourses about consumerism, gender, politics, agriculture, and nature, became part of the project (Goatly, 2000). Ecolinguistics was designed to better understand the ecological roles that languages play, and in doing so, it has developed several theories that investigate the link between language and ecology. Stibbe (2015) in his book “Language, Ecology and the stories we live by” introduced eight different sorts of stories including ideology, framing, metaphor, evaluation, identity, conviction, salience, and erasure.

2.1.1.1.1.2 Erasure

Erasure, in this context, is defined by Stibbe (2015) as the act of ignoring, sidelining, or overlooking anything vital or necessary in a text or discourse. Ecolinguistics consider all participants to be of critical importance, both those that are mentioned directly within texts and those who are kept in the background, are omitted, or deleted from text. If there are frequent absences of certain people,

comments, or words over several texts and discourse, it could reveal that those people are either insignificant, irrelevant, or insignificant to the narrative (Stibbe, 2015). Ecolinguistics is relevant in this investigation of linguistic erasure. The focus is on investigating the ways in which language works by analyzing what has been erased by texts and discourses, along with trying to discover whether this erasure is problematic and, if it is, then to ascertain how erased elements can be restored to consciousness (Abram, 1996).

Barnet (2003) asserts that there is a tendency to "erase" gender in whiteness studies; Lutz (1990) points out that gender is "erased" in several academic disciplines; and Frohmann (1992) calls attention to the fact that gender is "erased" in various academic disciplines. Erasure, in this context, is defined as the act of ignoring, sidelining, or overlooking anything vital or necessary in a text or discourse. According to Baker & Ellece (2011), "erasure" is a type of marginalization and exclusion especially when applied to identity categories. In this context, "exclusion" means that some social actors are omitted from a text or inside a discourse. As further described by Leeuwen (2008) suppression occurs when a text is absolutely void of social actors. In contrast, backgrounding occurs when actors are only present in one portion of the text but are then excluded later in the text. Fairclough (2003) notes that those who do not appear during situations that are characterized by abstract language that leaves out specific variables are "backgrounded." The term "erasure" is used by Stibbe (2015) to describe censorship, concealment, suppression, excision, and other techniques to redirect readers' attention away from particular groups or issues. According to Stibbe (2015), discourse can't exist without erasure. Since texts and discourses are always telling a partial story, they are certain to fail when trying to depict the totality of a particular region of life. Once, the analyst who is analyzing a certain text has completed a comprehensive review of all the aspects that have been omitted, he recognizes which one is crucial, announces that it is being wiped from the collective consciousness, and suggests that it should be considered again. It is ultimately the purposes and interests of the analyst that determines what 'that something important' is. Linguists such as (Everett & Neu, 2000; Fisher & Freudenburg, 2001; Neu, 2000; Eisenstein, 2011) talk about the erasure of people (transgenders, poor and the underprivileged) and the erasure of nature in various ways.

Berger (2009) talks about the erasure of animals. Kleist (1801) wrote an essay entitled “Why look at animals? In which he says that more and more creatures have been going extinct over the previous two centuries and this is happening because of the increasing distance between man and nature via nature programs, cartoons, logos, museums, books, soft toys, and social media. According to Abram (1996), ‘our civilization and its technology circumscribe anything that we come into contact with in terms of nonhuman nature.’ Kahn (2001) supports the idea and says that animals in the study of wildlife biology have frequently been ignored in the conversation. She shares her research into how the scientific community has acquired the ability to speak and use language devoid of acknowledgment of the reality of an alive, breathing, sentient being, or anything like it. As a result, scientists armed with dart guns and data sheets are linguistically trained to see non-human animals or animals of a lower order as non-sentient or, at best, sub-human and worthy of being exploited and controlled. Durham & Merskin (2009) express similar concerns about the ways in which researchers frame animals as objects and members of systems. Animals may be thought of as abstract concepts, rather than being treated as real people. In contrast to what many scientists believe, animals aren't merely omitted from biological discourse, but instead have their existence obliterated through "objectification and detachment" (Kahn, 2001).

According to Abram (1996), our ability to atone to the local ground is hampered by our ever-increasing interactions with our own signs. Recalling Bate (2000), alienation from nature accompanies ecological catastrophe. When humans are severed from their natural surroundings, they stop paying attention to how technology impacts the Earth's scarce resources. Studies show that it is difficult to expect people to recognize and care about information that is routinely removed from the texts in which they live. When examining the erasure of a particular sentence, it begins with an initial query regarding the subject of the sentence and the recognition that something that exists and could have been depicted has been omitted (Pierson, 2005). Passivity and nominalization could be methods of exclusion. Only a string of sentences is important, not any one sentence in particular. What is relevant is if there is a trend in the text of this nature and if yes, whether this trend is related to this sort of text (Kahn, 2001). Although “erasure” is often defined as a process that results in complete loss, it does not have to be so for all or nothing. Erasure happens in degrees,

with “strong” erasure resulting in almost total loss, while “weaker” forms of erasure may include only a small representation or may occur in the background or in a distorted form (Stibbe, 2015). He has discussed different forms of erasure in his book “Language, Ecology and the Stories we live by”. One of these forms is “the void”, which occurs when an important variable is “completely excluded” from the context. “Masking” occurs when the information is erased, but a distorted version of itself is left in its place. And “Trace” erasure involves the partial erasure of the content with some of its existence still present.

2.1.1.1.2 Nature Documentary: Wildlife Genre

Wikipedia defines a nature documentary as a specific kind of documentary film or series which primarily focuses on wildlife and nature, and has videos from the wild. Some topics may be about the relationship between humans and other species or ecosystems, many of these programs are typically created for television. Concurrent to the production of similar television series, this genre escalated. An overwhelming majority of nature documentary films or television series concentrate on a specific species, ecosystem, or scientific concept such as ‘evolution’ (Dingwall, 2006). Most people look at their subjects through a scientific and educational lens, but some people simply anthropomorphize them or show animals to appeal to the audience (Nature Documentary, n.d.). While wildlife television documentaries do have the potential to promote conservation and education, they often face issues like an unclear agenda or an awkward relationship with entertainment. Having the characteristics that may increase its impact on the audience, is significant for this genre (Bousé, 1998). Due to the need for a cohesive narrative, efforts to discover the contingency and amorality of evolution are generally discouraged. In practice, these educational materials endorse creationist accounts while being unconcerned with challenging creationist arguments. Paradoxically, it may give evolutionary accounts greater opportunity to appear complex even though it is presumed that this kind of presentation would lead to a lower status in the media industry (Dingwall, 2006).

A question arises here, can we call a wildlife film a documentary? In an attempt to answer this question, we can consider Adcroft’s (2010) claims that when trying to explore complaints of wildlife cinema and documentary entertainment, it is crucial to distinguish between factual and entertaining elements. In the industry,

documentary filmmakers, broadcasters, and publicists will commonly refer to their work as "documentary." In the minds of the majority of documentary filmmakers, the term "documentary" has become almost interchangeable with the term "genre" (Adcroft, 2010). The opposite of this statement was said by Bousé (1998) who claims that the definitions of documentary only apply to wildlife film techniques in part.

While others have said that films and television are poor media to portray the "true" reality that occurs in actual time and space, Bousé (2000) believes otherwise. He says that dramatic events in nature are rare, although footage from action-packed wildlife documentaries lead us to assume otherwise. Film and television producers use nature to enhance the storylines in their content and to increase the dramatic impact of these shows (Bousé, 1999; Porter, 2006). Reality is the premise for their storytelling, but according to Bousé (1998), photographing animals up close contradicts the impartiality of wildlife films. Animals on TV are unable to explain their filmed behavior or biology, like human subjects in a documentary. Therefore, character behavior must be contextualized in relation to the plot and story in order to adequately communicate their actions. Because the filmmaker has complete control and is able to express subjectivity, it is vital to rethink the nature documentary away from the stereotypes of the documentary genre (Bousé, 1999).

According to Adcroft (2010), wildlife films cannot be regarded as authentic documentaries, but many people insist on considering them so. Many people expect that they are watching the real world. When it's discovered that the truth of filmmaking has been revealed, the public response and condemnation has been intense. He gives an example of the Wildlife Tv show "The Wild America (1996)" which was heavily criticized after it was discovered that confined animals had been deceptively shown as "wild". As a result, the entire documentary film genre was called into question, and "nature fakers" became a label attached to the show's creator, Marty Stouffer (Bouse, 1998; Mitman, 1999). Recently, *Survival* (1998) faced criticism after it was discovered that the show's crew had been utilizing wild animals in captivity to imitate the look of what was filmed in the wild (Hellen, 1998). The paradox raised by this challenge is the obligation of wildlife filmmakers to authentically portray nature for an audience that assumes reality. As with any film intended for an audience, wildlife films must adhere to the expectations of viewers expecting entertainment and drama. Filmmakers working in the field of wildlife,

whether it's for commercial or instructional purposes, have an obligation to provide an entertaining product, unless they position themselves as just an educational source. When wildlife video is presented as a documentary, public criticism of nature “fakery” is correct (Adcroft, 2010).

While Discovery Channel's nature programming erases the world in certain ways, another method of doing so is discussed by Pierson (2005) who says that when using animals in a human-centric context, they are not rendered as mere objects, but are treated as if they were human in form. This phenomenon is referred to as ‘Anthropomorphism’ which is highly prevalent in the nature/wildlife films and documentaries.

2.1.1.2.1 Anthropomorphism

Guthrie (1997) believes that anthropomorphism is a more direct expectation, an "involuntary perceptual strategy" where humans project the existence of humanlike or human causes or forms onto ambiguous or significant stimuli. Anthropomorphism defines the inclination to apply human qualities to the imagined or real behavior of nonhuman agents. We tend to look at the world through the lens of our own experiences. From here, it is a short step to applying human characteristics to nonhuman objects. These behaviors are obvious from early childhood (Blanchard, 1982; Boyer, 1996; Sullivan, 2006). As Ellen (1988) notes, we tend to use those models which are most immediate to help us understand the world around us. They are the things we can see and feel with our own bodies. We employ anthropomorphism to make our domain of understanding more humane by including non-human things and experiences. Many kinds of anthropomorphism can take place, for example, our use of metaphorical language such as likening clouds to "race in the sky." We might even find human faces in inanimate objects, such as using the phrase "man in the moon" (Blanchard, 1982). Animal empathy is likely most evident in our tendency to anthropomorphize animals. We have exhibited an insatiable curiosity and need to preserve the natural environment and the relationship we have with it through pictures, stories, and faith systems since the dawn of human history. This supports the hypothesis that even the earliest known modern people painted prey creatures like deer, bison, and others. Many ancient cultures incorporated animal-human creatures into their mythology and beliefs.

Animals in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics and Greek fables were depicted as gods. In Aesop's fables, the ancient Greeks made humans seem more like animals and used the tales to teach moral lessons (Hambly, 1954). For as long as we have had the ability to think of such an association, anthropomorphism has been employed to assist us in comprehending our place in the natural world and our relationship to the animal life contained within it. With the ubiquity of anthropomorphic conceptions in human culture, from literature and art to film and documentary, we see animals being anthropomorphized in most instances (Howe, 1995).

When people have an abundance of knowledge about the human condition, human characteristics will be associated with people, and when people have a sense of belonging in their community, anthropomorphic tendencies will also increase (APA, 2017). Anthropomorphism goes way back to the era of Charles Darwin and other naturalists like George, Henri and Elizabeth Peckham (Crist, 1999). The kind of language that these naturalists used for the representation of animals that incorporates an extremely deep connection between human and animal realities. The character traits assigned to this alignment are frequently perceived as anthropomorphic. There is no specific definition for anthropomorphism, as it usually involves an inaccurate or overly romantic attribution of human traits to animals. It is believed that using the term anthropomorphism is used to detract from the legitimacy or verisimilitude of stories that in some way portray animal and human existence as being connected (Crist, 1999).

Crist (1990) in her book "Images of Animals" says that Darwin laid the groundwork for anthropomorphism with his theories on evolution. While one might dismiss the literalness of Darwin's anthropomorphism as metaphorical, erroneous, or insignificant, his work requires careful consideration because of its intrinsic quality. Darwin was a stellar observer and an inventive thinker who drastically updated our understanding of the connection between humans and animals with his idea of the genealogical relationship between species. Through his humanlike portrayal of animals, he illustrates how widely intertwined the worlds of evolution and personalization are (Crist, 1990). By establishing that people and animals have a common ancestry, his arguments undermined the credibility of the religious beliefs of species' fixity, special creation, and uniqueness for humans. The notion of common ancestry, accepted widely as an incontestable fact shortly after the publication of

Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, made possible the connection between human and animal worlds by linking the two worlds together regarding common ancestry. This new connection opened the doors for inquiry into phenomena of mind, will, and language in the animal world (Mayr, 1982).

Finally, with the discovery of evolutionary continuity, Darwin provided us with the theoretical foundation for the study of animal behavior. Perhaps Charles Darwin is most remembered for his work in the subject of behavioral science today, and it is for his 1872 work "The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals" which is sometimes referred to as "ethology". The great importance of Darwin's work with evolution in psychology was that it brought the study of human and animal behavior and mind to bear on a scientific perspective based on an evolutionary theory (Lorenz, 1965; Burkhardt, 1985).

Even though Darwin's discoveries and those of twentieth-century behavioral science are inextricably linked, there remains a significant gap between Darwin's work and current understandings of animal behavior. At first glance, some thought that Darwin's language was "anthropomorphic." Some prominent ethologists, such as Barnett (1958) critique Darwin's anthropomorphizing of animal existence, thus requiring correction. Ghiselin (1969), a Darwin expert, claims that most of Darwin's writing is figurative rather than literal. Mostly, though, animals have responded to Darwin's theory with silence. According to the historian Burkhardt (1985), there have been at least two reasons for the neglect of Darwin's animal behavior work. The first is the anthropomorphic nature of many of his explanations of behavior. Overall, people have generally held the view that Darwin spoke to animals in "humane" terms simply because it was common in his time. They have since revised this view and considered it metaphorical instead. Others view it as insignificant in comparison to Darwin's major accomplishments.

Darwin's animal portraiture was a realistic, veridical portrayal of animals, but it was never meant to be anthropomorphic. In contrast to arguing that his comprehension of animal life supports his notion of evolutionary continuity, Crist (1990) says that his anthropomorphism can be described as either error, metaphor, or completely undeserved attention. Contrary to mechanomorphic and skeptical beliefs, Darwin's language encompasses a compelling and cohesive perspective of animal life,

one that is at odds with the mechanomorphic and skeptical ideas that prevailed in twentieth-century behavioral philosophy. Using Darwin's terms, it is a ringing affirmation of the continuity between animals and people, indicating that there was evolutionary continuity between animals and humans. He employs ordinary human concepts and actions as resources through which to view and understand animal existence. According to Degler (1991), Darwin's underlying anthropomorphism was a function of his dedication to illustrate the continuity between humans and nonhuman creatures as often and as thoroughly as possible. Darwin sometimes used the idea of animals with advanced mental functions to argue for evolution (Ghiselin, 1969).

Darwin (1859, as cited in Crist, 1990) says that animals demonstrate higher mental traits, such as the ability to imitate, concentrate, remember, dream, and reason. He says that spiders show "a high degree of mental capacity." According to Darwin, it is quite possible that several actual stories of delayed or clever revenge have circulated for a long time among monkeys and other animals. According to him, "One horse demonstrates where it wishes to be scratched by nipping at the other horse." The results generally show that gestures and expressions are to some extent mutually understandable in social animals. Anyone who has observed primates would recognize that they comprehend each other's subtle expressions and actions flawlessly. Darwin laid the foundation of anthropomorphism, and it has grown ever since. Today, all nature documentaries and films refer to the animals in consideration using anthropomorphic constructs which ultimately erases the animals of their natural context and places them in a human setting.

2.1.1.2.1.1 Anthropomorphism in Wildlife Genre

Adcroft (2010) says that since humans are creatures of anthropomorphism, it is not surprising that animals have served as the "heroes" of film since the beginning. A zoopraxiscope was created in order to test how a horse ran, which led to the development of a whole line of motion pictures known as the Zoopraxiscope series. Sallie Gardner at a Gallop, a series of fast-motion still shots produced by Muybridge (1878) helped launch the motion picture industry. While the original goal of recording animal life on film has remained consistent, the frequency with which this goal is met has increased as a result (Mitman, 1999). Despite growing wildlife interest, we continue to be fascinated by wildlife-filmed content as we have seen with all of the

safari adventure films throughout the 1900s, Walt Disney's animal stars, the BBC Natural History Unit's blue-chip wildlife documentaries, and even modern-day televised animal docudramas (Horak, 2006). By separating animals from their natural setting and placing them in a humane construct, we strip them of their reality and put them into a human fiction. We can represent human motivations and feelings in animals by various techniques such as characterization and personification, evocative music, and the implementation of a narrative structure (King, 1996; Porter, 2006; Mitman, 1999). There's a multitude of linguistic choices the speakers of these nature documentaries have to represent the animals, but they choose the ones producing anthropocentric effect. Even if the behavior of animals on screen is assumed to represent the true behaviors of the animals in the natural world and animal biology, how the animals are anthropomorphized may say a lot about the filmmaker's choices and the cultural background (Porter, 2006; Mitman, 1999).

2.1.1.2.1.1.1 Lexical Choices (Anthropomorphic Constructs)

Lexical choice is the challenge of finding the most appropriate words to express an input meaning representation (Lan & Paraboni, 2018). Lexical patterns are an analysis of the choices and combinations of words and sentences and sentence structures that individuals and events are described with, as well as the overall structures of these sentences (Glosbe, n.d.).

Sealey & Oakley (2013), say that the wildlife TV shows characterize the kinds of organisms in terms of their tendency to act in a certain way: that is, they describe them in terms of them being motivated by want and intention. What viewers will likely notice are cases of anthropomorphism, where this connotation is expressed through the use of terminology. Consider both musical and visual channels. It is said in the episode named 'Creatures of the Deep' of the wildlife TV series 'Life' that in the moment just after the first male cuttlefish mates with the female, a second male cuttlefish appears and is identified as being little, which is an indicator that "he" is less likely to mate successfully without being attacked by other males. Although the film shows the small male changing color, moving closer to the larger male, it should be noted that in this instance, the smaller male becomes a female. Then, the shot of the larger male's gaze shifts to focus on something else, with the camera descending to a point lower on the screen to frame the smaller male's swimming to the sound of

light, fun music (Sealey & Oakley, 2013). Many of the words and phrases in this piece refer to human nature and cultural norms. In particular, they involve discussion about monogamy and faithfulness. This consciously humanistic sequence utilizes all three channels: visual, musical, and linguistic. Although presenters have more control over the resources which lie towards the grammatical end of the lexical-grammatical system, viewers have less knowledge of these resources and their ability to manipulate them. The grammar we use in analyzing a nonhuman entity starts from a feature of grammar but focuses on our interest in how concepts of human abilities and behavior get associated with nonhuman creatures (Halliday, 2004; Hunston & Francis, 2000).

Hunston & Francis's (2000) views are opposed by Elliot (2001) who believes that movies are "created" by humans and used by groups of people, including cultural ones. Despite this assertion, anthropomorphism is frequently criticized as an unscientific, sentimentally motivated style of portrayal. These critics call it a "cheap" and "inaccurate" approach that "seriously-minded" natural history filmmakers should avoid (Mitman, 1999; Elliot, 2001; Horak, 2006; Porter, 2006). Trusted and recognized BBC wildlife broadcaster David Attenborough had the following to say in the introduction to the 25th anniversary edition of the BBC Natural History Unit's *Wildlife*, the intent of the *Wildlife on One* series was "... to shed light on the rest of the animal kingdom, no matter how taboo it may be." While audiences are not the focus of the movie and TV industry, it is nevertheless true that both industries are designed for the enjoyment of viewers.

While it is crucial to assist viewers empathize with animals by using behavior that is both familiar and relatable, it is also a good idea to link the behavior to behavior that is easily identifiable, as with our own (King, 1996; Pierson, 2005; Bousé, 2000; Porter, 2006). No one knows what an animal thinks, so how can we understand what they do? They have to be interpreted and put into human terms to convey meaning (Mitman, 1999). If easily identifiable characters are imagined as extensions of our understanding and perception of human behavior, it is considered acceptable for game characters to be simplistic in their look. The good guys battle the bad guys, families are joyful, males are aggressive, and females are maternal; all of which contribute to dominating human cultures' concepts of class and gender (King, 1996; Pierson, 2005). This animal personality-characterization technique has become

commonplace in wildlife cinematography, when animals are anthropomorphized and given personalities and names. This implies that the anthropomorphic lexical choices (using pronouns, adjectives etc.), which are mainly used to refer to humans, move the audiences more and this is the reason the wildlife commentators make such choices. They use the ‘Gendered Pronouns’ to refer to the non-human animals. Oxford dictionary defines a pronoun as a term that replaces a noun. With language, we are able to both inform and connect. Everything around us is used to describe, characterize, and communicate, and these words are just one small piece of that whole. No term is more closely associated with us than the ones we use to refer to ourselves. There are two gender-specific pronouns. Generally, “She” is employed by female-identifying individuals. People who identify as male typically use “He” (Minus18, 2021). On her films about chimpanzees, Dr. Jane Goodall says: "I believe people would have been more interested if I had used the name David Graybeard rather than #29. The chimpanzees were able to make themselves known because of their names. While it's true that the chimpanzees were required to be “characters” in a tale before the audience could care about their situation, this is not evidence that the stories caused the audiences to empathize with the chimpanzees.

This view might be right to some extent that anthropomorphism creates empathy in the audience’s mind but the fact that anthropocentrism is a product of anthropomorphism cannot be ignored. Not every individual perceives a discourse in a similar manner. There’s always some black with the white.

2.1.1.3 Language and Ecology

The Ecological Society of America defines Ecology as the study of the relationships between living organisms, including humans, and their physical environment; it seeks to understand the vital connections between plants and animals and the world around them. Ecology also provides information about the benefits of ecosystems and how we can use Earth’s resources in ways that leave the environment healthy for future generations (The Ecological Society of America, 2021). On the other hand, the phrase 'language ecology' is similar to 'language family,' as both terms refer to life-forms, and language ecology describes both species and their language components. Languages are different from the speakers who use them, and the way

languages are connected to the environment has important differences from the way their users interact with the environment (Nordquist, 2019).

Language ecology is the study of interactions between any given language and its environment, as defined by Haugen (1972). It was developed in response to Chomsky's ideas on language, which conceived of language as a monolithic, decontextualized, and static object. With respect to ecological placement in their surroundings, Haugen put out ten questions to completely address the various aspects involved. These phrases pertain to distinct topics within the realm of language research and each of them intersects with one or more of the other subfields. Studying the questions here will help you better understand the ecosystem of language. In order to describe things like human population growth, political landscape shifts, and the evolution of educational programs, ecological linguistics has shifted to cover topics that are social, educational, historical, and developmental in nature. According to current developments in ecology as a distinct branch of biology, and questions related to the two-century-long period spanning the 20th and 21st centuries such as migration, hybridity, and marginalization becoming important, the concept of language ecology is also relevant in relation to larger issues such as language endangerment, human rights, and theoretical concepts, as per Haugen's work (Language Ecology, 2020).

“Language Ecology” challenges the “Economic Theory” which relies on concepts like "individual utility", "consumer", "extraction", etc., and regularly provides the framework for how the economy is conceived. Economic theory further suggests that humans are independent from their environment, and that nature exists solely to serve human interests (Stibbe, 2015; Cáceres, 2019). Advertising discourse in particular tends to promote the production of superfluous and industrially manufactured commodities that put pressure on the environment by polluting and mistreating the natural world. We humans perceive ourselves as different and superior from other living beings, and that we have the right to exploit other living beings without regard for their well-being (Sider, 2019). He further says that "Self-interest, competitive and avaricious" is another rather rooted view, with the notion that humans are the only creatures with a psyche or mind. The field of language ecology focuses on interactions between each given language and its surrounding ecosystem. When

one thinks about the environment, the first words that come to mind are words that speak about the external world language provides an index for (Cáceres, 2019).

Although this is the linguistic environment, it is not of the language itself but rather of the language's vocabulary and grammar. Language usage is one of the defining characteristics of a language's context. Language has only mental reality; it lives in the minds of those who use it, and it serves to connect them to the people and the environment in which they live (Haugen, 1972). He further adds that a lot of its ecological balance is psychological, with the mental interplay of bi- and multilingual speakers. This ecosystem interacts in important ways with society. A language's ecology is essentially shaped by individuals who use it, learn it, and then pass it on to others (Haugen, 1972).

Similar views are shared by Chen (2016) who insists that ecolinguistics and 'language ecology' is based on "ecosophy", a philosophy of ecological balance or equilibrium.

2.1.1.3.1 Ecosophy and Environmental Sustainability

Stibbe (2015), in his book "Ecolinguistics: Language, Ecology and the stories we live by" says that, Each ecolinguist uses his/her own unique set of ethical principles when evaluating stories, which represents his/her own beliefs and priorities but all ecolinguists concur on a set of relationships between humans and other organisms, as well as environmental factors. Ecosophy is an abbreviation of "ecological philosophy" and was popularised by the Norwegian environmentalist Naess (1973). To illustrate his point, he offers this analogy: 'A philosophy of ecological harmony is an ecosophy which clearly expresses ecological harmony's standards, rules, postulates, and value priorities. In an ecosophy, pollution, resources, population, and other relevant statistics are simply one small part of a comprehensive look at the values at stake' (Naess, 1995).

Stibbe(2015), further says that it is not possible to have one 'correct' ecosophy for ecolinguistics, given the 'norms' and 'value priority announcements' mentioned in the ecosophy include these. One way to measure an ecosophic view is to look at whether there is evidence that verifies or contradicts their assumptions about the state of the world. In regard to the construction of an ecosophy, various schools of thought exist and can be grouped along three spectrums. This spectrum starts with anthropocentric (human-centered) and then proceeds to ecocentric (ecosystem-

centered) (centered on all life including humans). Neoliberal ends with either socialist, localist, or anarchist. In other words, we have a third spectrum in which optimism and pessimism reside. Looking at the three spectra, it is evident that they all lie along a fairly consistent continuum (Stibbe, 2015). This supports the claim that free-market conservative ideologies tend to be optimistic and anthropocentric, while radical political ideologies tend to be pessimistic and ecocentric.

To show how several frameworks coexist on the spectrum, it's useful to provide a few philosophical ideas that serve as overviews. In the most conservative political circles, the idea is referred to as “cornucopianism.” This viewpoint views human inventiveness and the ever-improving technology as a means to confront the concerns around the environment and resources. As a result, humans should maintain and enhance industrial progress to advance exclusively human well-being (Lomborg, 2001 & Ridley, 2010). Some approaches combined under the concept of ‘sustainable development’ put an emphasis on the importance of both economic growth and environmental protection, as well as on socio-economic justice (Baker, 2006). A variety of perspectives on the economy exist, ranging from more conservative viewpoints, where growth is the foremost concern, to alternative approaches that place a stronger emphasis on social and environmental considerations. According to the theory of social ecology by Bookchin (2005), these origins of ecological damage can be found in social hierarchies that place one group over another. This viewpoint suggests that human dominance of nature will persist until humans manage to tame each other and each other's resources (Adams & Gruen, 2014).

Stibbe (2015) defines “Ecosphy” in one word as “Living!”. He explains “living” using different terminologies including ‘wellbeing of the humans, now and in the future, Environmental limitations and social justice’ etc as follows: ‘Every species deserves to be valued/celebrated/respected/affirmed’, hence the exclamation points in “Living!” represents the concept of living to be valued and celebrated (Stibbe, 2014). While a value announcement, this can be described as a discovery on the basis of which beings value their lives and so do anything they can to extend their life. People may value in numerous ways: for example, consciously, instinctively, and almost mechanically. It may be in the case of a bird flying away to avoid an oncoming vehicle, or in the way a snow buttercup follows the path of the sun to absorb its life-giving rays. Living is not the same as ‘being alive’, because in order to have the

capacity to value life, certain conditions must be present, such as no longer being able to enjoy life because of harsh exploitation, confinement in factory farms, or illness owing to chemical contamination (Stibbe, 2015).

Our goal should not merely be to stay alive, but to lead a high quality life. When it comes to promoting wellbeing for all species, higher wellbeing for humans is absolutely necessary, because it is not expected that measures aimed at reducing human impacts on the environment will be accepted. The view is supported by Bookchin (2005) and Stibbe (2015). They insist that we have to stop certain people from continuing to live, and hurt others in order to continue our own existences. The ecosophy's ethical tenets cope with this by positing an empathy for the concerns of others, a sense of remorse and a desire to thank those whom we have wronged, as opposed to seeking to maintain moral consistency by regarding those we injure as inferior, useless, or just resources.

Linguists like Adcroft (2010) who say that anthropomorphism promotes empathy should consider the fact that empathy is being aware of the impact you have on others. Regret means trying to minimize the harm you do to others. And thankfulness means having an obligation to give back to the systems that support you. The use of natural resources will be jeopardized if human consumption increases to a level that can't be supported by the replenishment of these resources. Conversely, if more trash is produced than can be absorbed by ecosystems, the extra waste will kill beings (Stibbe, 2015). Resilience stresses upon the factor that major ecological degradation is already occurring, and this trend will only accelerate as industrialized nations move further down the path of catastrophe. Therefore, in order to better handle environmental change, we must strengthen our capacity to adapt and be more resilient to new changes. We must also search for new forms of society, because the current forms will be in decline. It is essential in order to allow for a future on earth where human beings are able to lead satisfying lives while it is still possible (Stocker, 2014).

The ecosophy is inspired by deep ecology because it is ecocentric (taking into consideration all species as well as humans), but it is also pragmatic due to its focus on human wellbeing (Stocker, 2014). It also draws inspiration from social ecology because it is socially just and orientated towards social justice. Finally, it also takes

inspiration from sustainable development because it considers the needs of future generations. “Respectful use” of animals, plants, and nature derives from ecological animalism (Plumwood, 2012). Recognizing the need to continue human survival as well as the fact that other beings and natural systems go hand in hand in terms of being respectful in how one uses them (UNEP, 2012). Despite the theoretical foundation of ecosophy being built on ideals and assumptions, they must also be supported by evidence, and may be completely different in the future when new evidence surfaces. For one, there is substantial scientific evidence indicating that environmental limits have been crossed, the damage that has already been done and what remains to be done to adapt to it, and how much consumption will need to be reduced in order to minimize future damage (Alcamo & Bennett, 2003). According to Wilkinson & Pickett (2010), behavioral patterns are influenced by attitudes and values as well. Ecosophy incorporates an in-depth investigation of intrinsic and “larger-than-self” values, specifically altruism. Extrinsic values (such as a focus on personal enrichment, profit, or status) are tied with ecologically harmful behaviors, while intrinsic values (such as respect for the environment) are linked to pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010).

The whole discussion reaches the conclusion that the objective of ecosophy is to help raise public awareness and opposition to environmentally detrimental narratives, while also promoting more positive stories to help conserve the life-sustaining systems (Stibbe, 2015). This can be done using ecofriendly stories and theories like ‘ecopsychology’ that strengthen the nature-human bond.

2.1.1.3.2 Ecopsychology

The American Psychological Association, APA (2011) defines “Ecopsychology” as ‘the interconnectedness between humans and nature, which is inextricably linked to health and well-being’. The term ‘Ecopsychology’ was first coined by Fisher (2005) and has since grown into a social and intellectual movement. Eco- Psychologists study how we humans relate to nature on an emotional level. A simplified way to explain the basics of eco-based psychology is to say that it brings psychological insights to the grassroots environmental movement. The term was first introduced by Roszak (1960) who was a prominent member of the counterculture movement. His work is often seen as the catalyst behind the idea, which first appeared

in print in the 1990s. One way to conceptualize the emergence of the Roszak's (1960) creation concept is to say that it was brought about by merging the emotional sensitivity of therapists with the scientific understanding of ecologists. The application of this new science goes beyond simply mending one person to include an extensive re-imagining of society's relationship with the environment. While promoting individual healing, Eco-therapists are also engaged with the community. We are linked to our surroundings and our lives inextricably because they reflect both important ideas. Individuality and environment are two sides of the same coin, and both are dependent on each other (What is Ecopsychology, 2021).

Ecopsychologists blend psychological concepts and practices with ecological practices to help people disengage from feelings of anger and worry about the environment (APA, 2011). Rather than insisting that others conserve the environment, we should make responsible invitations and be mindful of others' needs (Roszak, 1960). Ecopsychologists use ecological principles and connections with nature to enhance psychotherapist techniques, as well as for personal and spiritual wellbeing. Clients' well-being and the environment are assured with their services (APA, 2011). Humans have a profound relationship with the natural world, one that is mutually beneficial. To understand this, think of the various aspects of nature as a house (or family) as well as the various aspects of nature acting as a symbol of the collective self (Clayton, 2011). Furthermore, when people are disconnected from nature, they are separated from those who share their experience of the environment. That separation results in mutual suffering, such as with environmental damage and grief and estrangement. Returning to nature allows individuals to heal psychologically and emotionally, encourage environmental responsibility, promote sustainability, and provide personal identity and fulfilment (Kahn & Hasbach, 2012).

It has major consequences for human identity, and this should be included in human wellness. Studies in ecopsychology cover the various emotional responses to nature, as well as the environmental repercussions of calamities such as tsunamis and climate change. Also, ecopsychology focuses on spiritual connections with nature and feelings of environmental connectedness (Doherty & Clayton, 2011). The present study bases its arguments on the eco-centric approach and promotes the idea of environmental sustainability using this theory of ecopsychology which has been proved beneficial by many linguists in the past.

2.2 Previous Studies

As recently there has been high projection of anthropomorphism in many nature/wildlife documentaries, films and even short stories, therefore, it usually gets belittled or misconstrued through humans. Nature has always been an element of subject as per the willing choices made by certain filmmakers, producers or specifically the ones dealing with the projections related to the wildlife. It has always been an agenda of creating a mere medium of entertainment through the animals that targets a particular audience. There is a multitude of people in the world and everybody perceives the things they come in contact with differently. Same is the case with anthropomorphism. There are dichotomous views, some believe that anthropomorphism has a positive effect on the public and some believe otherwise.

Although anthropomorphism can be criticized in many different contexts yet through this technique, awareness has surely been spread, be it in the form of “empathy” (Adcroft, 2010). He is of the view that anthropomorphism in wildlife films and documentaries is often misconceived. It does not promote anthropocentrism rather creates a bond of affiliation between humans and animals. Akien (2004) conducted similar research by scrutinizing the use of anthropomorphism in the New Yorker dog cartoons in which she states that the nature of the link between people and animals is itself a psychological subject. One aspect of this relationship is people's tendency to give their animals human thoughts, feelings and motivations. Anthropomorphism is universally apparent among people who have fellow animals (Serpell, 2003). Owners often talk anthropomorphically about dog behavior, for instance saying that pets are "jealous," "in love" or "depressed." Together with anthropomorphic pets, owners have also started to treat their pets like people (Serpell, 2003). This point is further verified by Gardyn (2002) who proved through his study that 92% of the pet owners view their pets as family members. A mass of articles, books, and films about dogs, representing them using human characteristics, demonstrate the current popularity of pets. New York's many cartoons depicting anthropomorphic dogs reflected this trend. For example, there is a difference in value or significance between dogs behaving like human beings (wearing a hat for example), and dogs talking in cartoons. Moreover, dogs who speak to other dogs may differ from dogs who talk to people. Therefore, analysis of the specific types of

anthropomorphic cartoons proved that not just the number of New York based anthropomorphic dog cartoons grew over time from with the greatest proportion of anthropomorphic cartoons in the 90's but the number of pets adopted by people also boosted drastically.

This positive side of anthropomorphism has been further supported by Zhao & Zou (2017) who through their work, argue that over the past few years, documentaries related to wildlife have been evolved as well as transformed positively as the binary structures are basically deconstructed using the strategies of anthropomorphic elements which as a result have further strained the relationship that exists between the animals and human beings. In the major spectrum it has created and acquired the “harmonic” features respecting the existence of animals in this world. And it has been proved that the strategies have surely created a significant relationship. They say that the English Language is not just rich in synonyms but many other such areas. It has always been used with great frequency by “discourse analysts”, “wildlife broadcasters” to mediate between their audience by connecting it to the world of nature, wildlife. And using grammatical structures, our perception towards the wildlife is eventually constructed in a certain lens. We create these perceptions and opinions by relating it to our experiences.

These studies hold a biased approach and deal only with the positive side of the anthropomorphic language. The void that the anthropomorphic approach creates between animals and humans has not been addressed by the following studies. The fact that anthropomorphism raises awareness against animal cruelty and creates empathy is somehow justifiable however, it leads to the erasure of animals from their natural habitat and contextualizes them into the human world. These views are supported by Burt (2002), who in his book states that the audience’s perception towards films related to animals has always been different in imaginary state as compared to other genres; comedies, actions etc. visualized in films. The appearance of animals creates the factors such as empathy within the minds of humans on the basis of which they compare and contrast the film with the way animals are actually being treated in real life. The sense of alienation as well as fragmentation in films represents animals nothing but merely a commodity, where humans treat them as weak and dependent objects. This prestige makes humans enjoy the power of superiority by being the controllers and authoritative figures commanding over

animals. Therefore, the desires aroused in the minds of the audience differ when they are shown the figures of other human beings and animals. Those who are engaged directly with animals about whatsoever they do, can create a plausible conception of anthropomorphism.

There are some conditions where humans can clearly perceive or analyze the mental qualities of animals through their behavior. Burt (2002) further states that imagination and illusions can be highlighted as major ingredients of the relationship that exist between humans and animals which is somehow justified. The powerful tool of “anthropomorphism” however, uses the mental qualities of humans as a lens to view animals (Servais, 2018). The outcome of an anthropomorphic mindset is humans perceiving the animal behavior through their own frame of mind instead of understanding them in their natural context and perceive them as a weaker commodity. The current study explores the similar idea in an animal series ‘MeatEater to show how the use of anthropocentric language can cause erasure and affect the ecology and nature.

Molloy (2006) conducted exploratory research on the discourses of anthropomorphism in which she presents a historical study of the practices that humanize animals that are not human. She insists that anthropomorphic practices have continued to dominate cultural production from the 19th to the 21st centuries. She argues that the criticisms and appropriations of anthropomorphism resonate and regulate our daily encounters with and the construction of nonhuman animals. She suggests that the production of knowledge on non-human animals is intrinsically linked to anthropomorphic practices and that 'differences' among humans and non-human animals have been central to reproducing the anthropomorphized non-human animals as a crucial cultural agent. Molly (2006) argues that anthropomorphism is intrinsically bound to change human/non-human animal difference structures. In particular, she has claimed that these configurations of knowledge/discourse involve distribution of power with material consequences for human and non-human animals. Her views are supported by Sealey & Oakley (2013) who believe that the world has always been a subject of different depictions and contradictions considering humans as the focal point of observations. Therefore, it has been highlighted that the use of certain grammatical patterns; pronouns, infinitive forms etc. plays a significant role in presenting the huge number of species that are represented through different channels

and platforms, mainly the wildlife documentaries and films. They say that the English language is rich in synonyms, and it offers the wildlife broadcaster a wide range of options as s/he uses commentary to mediate between the television viewer and denizens of 'the natural world'. It is well established that these choices cannot be neutral, and that they will inevitably carry cultural and even ideological connotations. The claims of these researchers are supported by Stibbe (2015) who argues that attributing human like qualities of thinking and managing risks erases animals, shows them as inferior and allows the benefits to float with the dominant group i.e the humans.

Where some believe that portraying animals as humans might help preserve them, some use the technique of anthropomorphism to ignite negative feelings. Agnese (2014) conducted research on the novel "The Road " and the movie "The walking dead" to scrutinize the environmental values portrayed in them and how humans use nature and geography in political issues. She argues that humans have transformed 'nature' into a "socially-constructed entity" and have made the environmental discourses an important part of the 'geopolitics'. Her study asserts that there's no state of equilibrium between human activities and the natural forces. The movie "Walking Dead" shows how with the increase in natural 'non-human entities', humans started decreasing because the plants, animals and the zombies were increasing. The depiction of such concepts on a global level gives rise to a feeling of fear in the human's minds, thinking of nature as an enemy. Such narratives need to be challenged and humans should consider an 'eco-centric approach' that must lie closer and deeper to ecology and try to bring a balance between human society and the natural physical environment instead of considering an 'anthropocentric approach'.

Anthropomorphism has provided a strong framework that has helped in elevating ratings of the shows, and it has also popularized the television programs about wildlife series. This is proved by Vilasco (2018) who investigated the relationship between the consumers' reactions and anthropomorphism for his research study in which he cites (Chen et al., 2017) who suggest that anthropomorphism has a positive effect on consumer responses to anthropomorphic motivations but still other scholars (Kim et al., 2016) report that anthropomorphism affects the response of consumers. This issue provides an opportunity to examine the effect of anthropomorphism more thoroughly using a meta-analytical approach.

Anthropomorphism generally provides marketers with a powerful tool as it allows consumers to connect to brands and social causes, helps to extract the necessary significance from the brand, and creates affective thoughts to react positively. Previous studies have produced erroneous results on anthropomorphic effects, but this research differs in many aspects, including the context of study, the nature of stimulus products, and individual factors. The main mechanism behind anthropomorphism's effect is affective thought. The use of a positive frame in the social experience is announced in accordance with the affective thought account, enhancing the impact of anthropomorphism on acts of social goodwill. However, this is a marketing scheme being used to reach a greater audience and lacks the exploration of how this idea negatively impacts the users mind and erases the animals from discourse. Hence it is validated that most of the nature documentary speakers use anthropomorphism to increase their ratings and make money. They are not concerned with encouraging a healthy human-nature bond but just to fake nature to achieve goals.

As this field of linguistic study is developing and more and more work is being done in this domain, the previous studies conducted have primarily focused upon the positive aspect of anthropomorphism and its other benefits. The ones addressing the negative side were more quantitative and mathematical in nature as they just highlighted the use of pronouns and infinitives and calculated their frequency. They did not address the outcome of the use of the anthropocentric constructs. The present research fills this lexical gap by focusing primarily upon 'Anthropomorphism' used for 1) the loose representations of animals killed for meat, 2) How nature (in the form of both animals and inanimate phenomena) is represented as "an exploitable commodity" and "a territorial possession" and 3) the use of "gendered pronouns, verbs and adjectives" about animals that describe different species and their actions and behaviors in discourse. 4) How anthropomorphism leads to erasure and anthropocentrism. The researcher's perspective tends to mirror the animal rights. Much of what has been written about anthropomorphism by ecologists is about vocabulary: whether, how, or why particular terminology is appropriate when referring to animals. The nature of the present research is more linguistic and hence the focus is on the use of English language, specifically the anthropomorphic constructs used for the representation of animals in nature documentaries/films and

their potential to manipulate the masses into believing in certain “cultural codes/view views”.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section demonstrates the selected methodology for upholding the study and also provides rationale for every step. This chapter moves systematically, starting from the explanation of research paradigm and research approach to the criterion of the collection of data. However, before examining the details of the research dimension, the chapter initially explains the theoretical and analytical framework adopted for the study.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

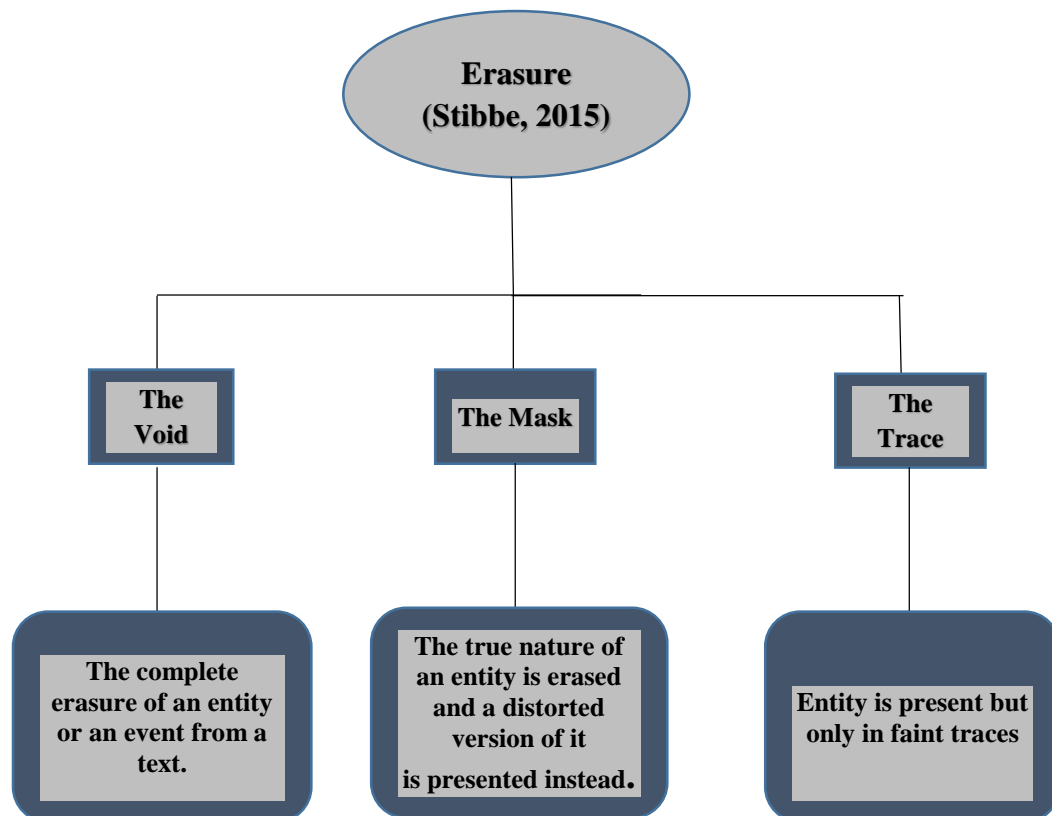
The present study uses the theory of ‘Erasure’ (Stibbe, 2015) and the theory of “Ecopsychology” (Fisher, 2002) as the theoretical framework. “Erasure is a story in people’s minds that an area of life is unimportant or unworthy of consideration. It is a linguistic representation of an area of life as irrelevant, marginal or unimportant through its systematic absence, backgrounding or distortion in texts” (Stibbe, 2015, p.145). Stibbe (2015) cites (Frohmann, 1992; Barnet, 2003; Ferber, 2007; & Lutz, 2009) who argue that “whiteness studies, in its concentration on race and privilege, has ‘erased’ gender; technology has been ‘erased’ in cultural critique; women’s writing is ‘erased’ in sociocultural anthropology, and the social dimension is ‘erased’ in cognitive information science. Stibbe (2015) says that linguists consider all participants to be of critical importance, both those that are mentioned directly within texts and those who are kept in the background, are omitted, or deleted from text. If there are frequent absences of certain people, comments, or words over several texts, this could reveal that those people are either insignificant, or irrelevant to the narrative (Baker & Ellece, 2011). Ecolinguistics is relevant in this investigation of linguistic erasure. The focus is on investigating the ways in which language works by analyzing what has been erased by texts and discourses, along with trying to discover whether this erasure is problematic and, if it is, then to ascertain how erased elements can be restored to consciousness (Abram, 1996).

Berger (2009) talks about the erasure of animals by referring to the essay written by Kleist (1801) entitled “Why look at animals? More and more creatures have been going extinct over the previous two centuries and this is happening because

of the increasing distance between man and nature via nature programs, cartoons, logos, museums, books, soft toys, and social media. According to Abram (1996), 'our civilization and its technology circumscribe anything that we come into contact within terms of nonhuman nature.' As Kahn (2001) points out, animals in the study of wildlife biology have frequently been ignored in the conversation. She shares her research into how the scientific community has acquired the ability to speak and use language devoid of acknowledgment of the reality of an alive, breathing, sentient being, or anything like it. As a result, scientists armed with dart guns and data sheets are linguistically trained to see non-human animals or animals of a lower order as non-sentient or, at best, sub-human and worthy of being exploited and controlled. Durham & Merskin (2009) express similar concerns about the ways in which researchers frame animals as objects and members of systems. Animals may be thought of as abstract concepts, rather than being treated as real people. In contrast to what many scientists believe, animals aren't merely omitted from biological discourse, but instead have their existence "obliterated" through "objectification and detachment" (Kahn, 2001). While Discovery Channel's nature programming erases the world in certain ways, another method of doing so is discussed by Pierson (2005) who says that "when using animals in a human-centric context, they are not rendered as mere objects, but are treated as if they were human in form." Abram (1996) supports the idea and says that our ability to atone to the local ground is hampered by our ever-increasing interactions with our own signs. Recalling Bate (2000), alienation from nature accompanies ecological catastrophe. When humans are severed from their natural surroundings, they stop paying attention to how technology impacts the Earth's scarce resources.

The present study uses the theory of Erasure to emphasize over the Erasure of animals at the hands of humans using anthropomorphic language. The study first highlights the gendered pronouns (He, She, They) that are used to refer to the animals in focus and then evaluates the anthropocentric effect produced by these gendered pronouns. As Stibbe (2014) and Abram (1996) say that using a language that humanizes animals while presenting them, erases the animals out of their natural context and places them in a human paradigm.

Figure 1
Visual Representation of Theory of Erasure



Note. This figure demonstrates the three levels of erasure used by the speaker in the selected sample to erase animals, each with its own description.

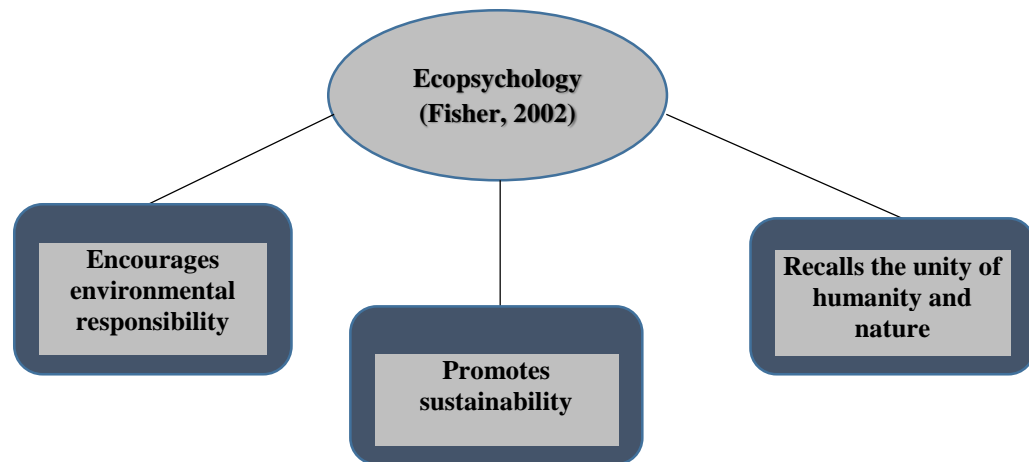
Erasure then has three levels: the void, the mask and the trace. Once the anthropomorphic gendered pronouns, promoting erasure, are highlighted, the study then analyzes which form of erasure the selected instances relate to. Either the speaker has completely erased the animals, masked the brutal realities such as hunting in a distorted fashion or presented the animals in the form of faint traces.

Fisher (2002) explains Ecopsychology as a theory that emotionally connects humans with nature. The term Ecopsychology was first coined by Roszak (1992) in one of his books named as “The Voice of the Earth” which was further explained later by Gomes & Kenner (1995). According to Fisher (2002), when people are disconnected from nature, they are separated from those who share their experience of the environment. That separation results in mutual suffering, such as with environmental damage and grief and estrangement. Returning to nature allows individuals to heal psychologically and emotionally, encourage environmental responsibility, promote sustainability, and provide personal identity and fulfillment.

(Kahn & Hasbach, 2012). Ecopsychology involves recalling the unity of humanity and nature. It is about rediscovering our roots in the earth and realizing human-nature kinship in all its concrete detail.

Figure 2

Visual Representation of Theory of Ecopsychology



Note. This figure demonstrates the three major aspects of the theory of ecopsychology that the present study uses to theoretically stand against the anthropocentric approach.

Since this research is about the existence of Anthropomorphic lexical choices in the wildlife TV shows, the researcher uses the theory of ‘Erasure’ to highlight the concept of ‘Anthropocentrism’ in the selected sample i-e Netflix original series ‘MeatEater’. It shows how humans represent and treat all non-human entities as secondary and unimportant, considering their very existence the only important thing in the universe. The second theory being used as the theoretical framework suggests remedial measures for the current issue by highlighting the emotional connection of humans with nature promoting the idea of ‘sustainability’, which shows how humans and non-human entities in the world can co-exist simultaneously while the environmental analysis of language using EDA (Eco-linguistic Discourse Analysis) exposes the fundamental worldviews. The researcher uses this theory to promote ideas and notions in the minds of people about how to treat each other, animals, plants, forests, rivers and the physical environment. These concepts are then questioned keeping in mind the present environmental issues and are then settled to inspire people to protect nature and ecosystems and to demote such behaviors which harm the ecology.

3.2 Analytical Framework

The present study uses EDA (Ecolinguistic Discourse Analysis) presented by Stibbe (2014) as the analytical framework. Ecolinguistic Discourse Analysis typically employs the same techniques of linguistic analysis as classic critical discourse studies, as well as the normative framework within which it operates. The field of Ecolinguistics analyzes discourses like consumerism to nature poetry in order to uncover those that foster care and respect for the natural environment, while also pointing out those that contribute to ecologically damaging behavior. Because ecolinguistics incorporates factors about non-human subjects and future generations who have not yet been born, it also complicates power relationships between the oppressor and the oppressed. This means that theory and application of CDS are required, especially to generate a normative framework for evaluating discourses (Stibbe, 2014). The peace that prevails when people consume beyond environmental constraints will be brief. Conflict, especially in regard to natural resources, is caused by pollution and over-exploitation of resources, according to Hiscock (2012). Studies which deal with ecolinguistics base their work on various philosophical and ethical systems, but all incorporate an environmental perspective and a social one. The terms “ecosophy” (Naess, 1996) and “ecolinguistics” (Plummer, 1999) are excellent for characterising contexts in which linguistic studies employ to judge discourses.

The essence of ecolinguistics is to challenge and dismantle our unsustainable civilization's myths and create new and more sustainable stories to replace them. The stories, while not narrative, can be viewed as types of speech, discourses, framings, metaphors, and so on (Stibbe, 2014). Halliday (2001) cautions that "a constellation of linguistic characteristics is fostering a maladaptive interpretation of reality; and that has become hazardous to our well-being as a species." Similarly, Mühlhäusler (2003) argues that "recent grammatical formulations could encourage language patterns that have helped to increase our current environmental problems." Halliday's argument (2002) is expanded in the quote above by Goatly (2001) who adds that ordinary language, in particular the transitive clause, is inadequate to the task of representing the world demanded by ecological theory, differing from Halliday (1991) who held that the problem was in features such as nominalization. For the most part, ecolinguistics (which is comprised of linguistics and environmentalism) involves a broad range of linguistic mechanisms for building, reproducing, distributing, and

resisting worldviews while eco-linguistics (which also incorporates environmentalism) concentrates on analyzing the impact these worldviews have on sustaining or decimating the ecological resources.

Among the many discourses that have been examined from an ecolinguistic perspective are discourses surrounding the concept of 'nature' (Knight, 2010; Hanson, 2006), issue of climate change (Doulton & Brown, 2009; Ihlen, 2009), and the concept of sustainability (Kowalski, 2013). An ecolinguistic approach to discourse analysis possesses several variations, but common characteristics can be listed below:

- 1) Topics/issues that may have a substantial impact on people's attitude toward one another as well as life itself.
- 2) Analyzing the discourses by breaking down the elements that create a worldview or "cultural code". A culture code refers to the package of shared values, norms, and principles that develops and reflects the community's shared values, principles etc. (Nuri, 2012). An excellent example is the widespread code that supports endless economic expansion, both as a viable option and as something that is desired by humans everywhere.
- 3) Following a certain criterion to judge worldviews, such as whether they promote ecological responsibility (or ecosophy). Ecosophy is informed by a holistic understanding of how humans are reliant on interactions with other organisms, as well as a connection to the physical environment to sustain their existence. At the same time, it adheres to a set of principles to guide their decisions, especially when it comes to the well-being of the population.
- 4) To uncover and bring to light the destructive or helpful discourses that are presumed to be ecologically unsound (i.e., in opposition to ecosophy principles), as well as search for and spread positive or impactful discourses that could aid the maintenance and sustainability of life (i.e., consistent with ecosophy values).
- 5) To use research to inspire people and help drive conservation initiatives by raising awareness of the relationship between language and environmental destruction or protection, informing policy, influencing educational development, or serving as ideas that can be employed in future text redesigns or new text production.

Martin & Rose (2003) described it as 'Positive Discourse Analysis,' while Macgilchrist & Bartlett (2007) refined the same concept. The word, however, has been a source of contention. The word "critical" does not entail "being negative" rather it is more inclined towards "proposing alternatives". Even if the majority of work in Critical Discourse Analysis and ecolinguistics consists of negative evaluations of discourses that contradict the analyst's beliefs and values, it can't be concluded that the work in this field is exclusively devoted to that pursuit (Stibbe, 2014).

The present research adopts the same analytical framework. Starting off with the identification of the anthropocentric lexical choices, the researcher moves to the Ecolinguistic Discourse Analysis of the selected sample following the five point agenda presented by (stibbe, 2014) mentioned above. Once done with the process the researcher moves on to the identification of the traces of erasure in the selected sample, detecting the different forms of erasure (The void, the masking and the trace) by scrutinizing the selected sample under the lens of Ecolinguistics and the selected theoretical and Analytical framework. The researcher then proceeds to conducting a thematic analysis of the comments/feedback of the audience retrieved from the IMDb original website and finally concludes the study on a positive note by highlighting the significance of "Nature and Environmental sustainability" with the help of the theory of "Ecopsychology" by Fisher (2002).

3.3 Research Design

The present research is a mixed method research. The research starts the data analysis with the calculation of the frequencies of the gendered pronouns used by the speaker in the selected sample. The frequency of each respective pronoun is then presented in the data analysis chapter in tabular form. Having used the mathematical approach to the data makes the present study quantitative in nature. The study then moves on to exploring the persuasive effect produced by the use of anthropomorphic lexical choices made by humans for the representation of non-human entities and how these anthropomorphic language constructs lead to anthropocentrism. This is done using the theory of 'Erasure' and 'Ecopsychology'. The researcher first highlights the anthropomorphic constructs on both word level and sentence level and then evaluates them under the model of EDA and the three different levels of 'Erasure'. The

researcher also conducts the thematic analysis of the audience's feedback on the selected sample to give strength to the chosen stance. This in-depth analysis of the selected sample makes the present study qualitative in nature.

Since the current study has both qualitative and quantitative data on board, it makes the present study a mixed method research.

3.4 Research Sample

Purposive sampling technique is used for the identification and selection of sample for the current study. Two complete seasons of the Netflix original series 'MeatEater', comprising eight and ten episodes respectively (a total of eighteen episode), have been selected as the sample of the present research because they are found to be rich in information closely related to my research questions. The plot of this show makes it an excellent choice to study the relationship between humans and their physical surroundings. A story of an adventurous man who hunts animals not only for the sake of assuaging his hunger but also for the sake of entertainment and pleasure. It would not be wrong to say that he is obsessed with killing animals and birds without paying any heed to the effects of his devastating actions on the natural world. From a linguistics standpoint, the hunter uses such a language that rules out the possibility of any harmony between human and non-human animals. Not only has that, through his language he assigns gender to the animals that engender from his pre-existing and pre-dominant social and cultural values. In this research, the researcher intends to underscore the devaluation done to animals through language by humans; stripping them far away from their own natural environment and making a counterintuitive attempt to locate them into our own. The thing that is even more alarming is him being broadcasted on a platform (Netflix) used worldwide by millions of people. Despite the presence of a strong competition, Netflix has retained its position as the best in TV and movie streaming because of its simple user interface, lack of advertisements, and unique content. Netflix is the top streaming video service for watching television series and movies over the internet and this is the reason one of the seasons from this platform is chosen for the present research. Another reason 'Netflix' was chosen is its quality of being readily available to anyone having the subscription. Currently there are "209 million" active users of Netflix around the globe which makes it very important to analyze the quality of content that is streamed

on this platform since this can easily influence the mindset of a huge audience which can result in catastrophic consequences.

3.5 Data Collection and Data Analysis Tools

The present study uses “TamperMonkey” software as the data collection tool and “Antconc” as the data analysis tool. For the identification and analysis of the lexical choices of the speaker, the episodes selected as a sample were first required to be transcribed. For that “TamperMonkey” software was used, which allows the premium quality download of the subtitles without any damage to the original text. The software allowed the smooth download of the English subtitles available at Netflix Original. Once transcribed, the text files were converted to “.txt files” format and organized into a digital corpus. “Antconc” which is a corpus analysis toolkit for concordance and text analysis was used to measure the frequency of the pronouns. Since concordance programmes are not able to accurately identify many of the verb usages and the context that they are used in, hence the verbs were highlighted manually to ensure quality and reliability. Furthermore, the occurrence of individual concepts like ‘ecology’, ‘ecosystems’, ‘deterioration of nature’ ‘erasure’ and ‘anthropomorphism’ were also highlighted and related to each other. Using (Stibbe, 2015) theory of ‘Erasure’ and (Fisher, 2002) theory of ‘Ecopsychology’ the selected sample was first used to highlight the existing problem and the perils that it carries by determining the interactional lexical choices made by the speaker and how they contribute in performing an anthropomorphic and anthropocentric function. Lastly, the persuasive function of the collected data was analyzed by evaluating the public responses and feedbacks posted on IMDb original website. A thematic analysis of these comments was done to identify common themes guided by the used theoretical framework.

3.6 Data Analysis Procedure

The “TamperMonkey” software was first downloaded and added as an extension in the gmail suite. The subtitles of the eighteen episodes of the Netflix series ‘MeatEater’ that are serving the selected sample were downloaded. Once the data was collected, it was ready to be analyzed. The collected data comprised transcriptions of the spoken commentary to all eighteen of the 25-30-minute-long episodes of the Netflix series “MeatEater”, a total of 64,493 words. Each episode of

the series featured the humans invading the natural ecosystems and hunting down an animal. Most of the episodes had different themes but some were a continuation of the previous theme. Themes here refer to the different categories of the animal kingdom: The mammals, the fish, the birds, the creatures of the deep ocean, and the cervidae. Once transcribed, the files were converted to text-only format and collated into a digital corpus. The program AntConc by Anthony (2021) was used for exploring the lexical choices (Pronouns, verbs, and Adjectives) and calculating the frequencies of individual items, for concordance analysis. The pronouns investigated were he, she and them. The use of these gendered pronouns produced an anthropomorphic effect and without the visuals it would be hard for anybody to identify if the species under discussion is a human or an animal because the way the speaker refers to them is not different from the way anyone would refer to a human. Each pronoun along with its frequency was then presented in tabular form in the data analysis which justified the quantitative aspect of the study.

While basic quantifications generated some interesting results, the researcher also found it necessary to look closely at the co-text of the target items. That is, the researcher wanted to know not only which creatures warrant pronominal s/he reference rather than it, but also what kinds of things “she,” “he,” and “they” are reported as doing. My analysis thus moves outward from the pronouns where it begins and includes the verbs of which these items are the subjects. Since concordance programs alone are not readily able to discriminate between the many uses of verbs, pronouns, and adjectives, the researcher had to analyze the results manually as well to isolate occurrences in the corpus of these items in the constructions of interest, removing those not fulfilling the criteria. For example, some of the pronouns and verbs were used for the human beings who were a part of the episodes. These instances were further explored to identify the patterns in which they occur and after the careful examination, they were filtered out. The selected instances which were producing an anthropocentric effect were then labelled under three different levels of ‘Erasure’ namely ‘the void’, ‘the mask’ and ‘the trace’. Each instance was then further analyzed critically under the lens of EDA. The anthropocentric constructs were criticized and the way these constructs erase the animals was highlighted. The final stage of the analysis was not just to review the various patterns, pronominal reference, and implied intention to see how they may cumulatively be involved in

suggesting that the creatures so depicted are acting from desire and intention but also to conduct a thematic analysis of the audiences' feedback on the show. The effect of anthropomorphism on the masses was explored using the public feedback given on the IMDb original website and Quora.com. Most of the comments indicated that shows like 'MeatEater' promote animal hunting and cruelty and that people start believing that the nature is for human use. The in-depth analysis of the selected justified the qualitative aspect of the study. The highlighted pronouns, verbs and adjectives narrowed down the instances for the researcher and made it easier to identify and explore 'Erasure' in the 'MeatEater'. The qualitative and the quantitative part of the study thus were combined to present that anthropomorphism does lead to anthropocentrism.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the qualitative data, Lincoln, and Guba's Evaluative Criteria (1985) for the trustworthiness of the data was used. For credibility, expert opinion and triangulation techniques were used. Triangulation analysis method, also known as peer briefing, contributed to the analysis of the ideas and interpretation of the themes in an unbiased way which can be understood by somebody who has no direct connection to the research. Along with this, expert opinions were considered on the qualitative data and research findings to see how a researcher interprets the data. These methods ensured that the data is analyzed at every level without any personal biases.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter provides an insightful analysis of the transcription of all eighteen of the 25-30-minute-long episodes of the Netflix series “MeatEater”, a total of 64,493 words. The analysis is done by seeking help from the theoretical insights of Stibbe (2015) notion of ‘Erasure’ and ‘Ecolinguistic Discourse Analysis’. The researcher has used ‘AntConc’ as an analytical tool to first measure the frequency of the pronouns (He, She and They) and then identify the co-text for further analysis. After calculating the frequency of the gendered pronouns, the verbs and adjectives used with those pronouns were identified and presented in tabular form for a descriptive analysis. With the help of the ‘Explore Co-text’ feature of the ‘AntConc’ program, the instances of ‘Erasure’ were identified and analyzed under the EDA model (Stibbe, 2015). Furthermore, three forms of erasure namely, ‘The Void, The Mask and the Trace’ were separately analyzed and presented in the findings chapter.

4.1 Anthropomorphic Constructs: Gendered pronouns, Adjectives and Verbs

In general, the results given below present quantitative information about gendered pronouns, but it should be noted that the results are somewhat correlated with the species distributions in the two complete seasons (18 episodes). The result generated through AntConc was cloned and is pasted below.

Table 1

Frequencies of gendered pronouns used in the MeatEater

Pronoun	Frequency
He	438
She	28
They	429

Note. This table demonstrates the frequency of each gendered pronoun used in the selected sample to refer to the animals.

With so many instances of he (438) and she (28), some had to be filtered out. To explore, initially, the kinds of things that creatures personified with gendered pronouns are depicted as doing, I focused on clauses with positive polarity and no modality. So, I excluded from this data subset instances of the following kinds: passives, where the pronominal subject is not the agent of the verb. I classified the remaining clauses, where he, she are the subjects, with reference to the actions denoted by the verbs. The creatures featured in this show are typically, and presumably undisputedly, depicted as doing the kinds of things which any observer of animal behavior would expect them to do moving, eating, killing prey, and so on, and so I did not focus on these clauses further. Examples are: “He eats the worm”. Likewise, relational clauses with link verbs denote neither animal behavior nor intention. This filtration process left me with the sentences/clauses in which there is more evidence of the kind of process which Halliday (2004) identifies as “mental,” where the active participant is a “sensor” engaged in a process of “perception,” “cognition,” “desideration,” or “emotion.”

To understand the appropriate usage of pronouns and adjectives, it is indispensable to first understand properly define the terms, “Sex” and “Gender”. “Sex refers to biological traits associated with male and female bodies. Sex isn’t a perfect binary, but it is relatively simple compared to gender. Gender is multifaceted, complex, and a little abstract, and not everyone agrees on exactly what it means” (Shwartz, 2018). The word, “Multifaceted” in the definition of gender is what gives the liberty to humans to assign pronouns to non-human animals. It seems linguists all over the world choose their own convenience at the expense of animals when it comes to defining gender. The word “multifaceted” complicates the definition of gender by giving it many dimensions that ultimately helps the linguists rationalize their use of language for their own benefit. Socially Influenced Non-Human Animal Pronouns and Adjectives: Gender is a socially constructed identity. The way a gender becomes a part of one’s sex depends on numerous factors. One of them is the social environment of a person. Our social environment dictates us to act the way we act to be the way we are. Gender non-conformity in a conservative society can curb one’s right to express himself in an authentic manner.

Socially, a man is expected to be “strong” and “superior” while a female is expected to be “shy”, “modest” and “dependent upon men”. Following are some of

the lexical expressions used for non- human animals in “The MeatEater” that are socially influenced.

4.1.1 Anthropomorphic Constructs (Pronouns and Adjectives)

Following table has been drawn for the justification of the point mentioned above. The instances have been taken from the selected sample.

Table 2

Adjectives used for the animals in the MeatEater

Species	Pronoun	Adjective	Clause
Deer	He	Big, Wide	He was big, He was wide.
Deer	They	Kind, Gentle	You look in their eyes, You can see there’s a bit of kindness or gentleness.
Duck	He	Bulletproof	Shoot that duck . . He’s bulletproof.
Mule Deer	She	Spirited	She’s a little more spirited.
Mule Deer	He	Huge	Dang, what a tank. Oh yeah, he’s huge.
Turkey	He	Funny	They’re funny.
Fish	He	Fat, Dark	There he is, a fat, dark male there.
Elk	He	Smart	He just lingered . . He’s smart.
Bull	He	Nice	He circles back around . . He’s a nice bull.
Turkeys	They	Cool, Versatile	They’re really cool and versatile birds.
Buck	He	Contender	I’m looking at a pretty decent buck . . He’s a contender.
Buck	He	Mature	Judging the body size, does he look mature?
Buck	They	Nimble, Delicate	They’re just nimble and delicate
Buck	She	Dainty	She still seems pretty dainty.

Bucks	They	Edgy, high-strung, majestic	Man, they're so high-strung and edgy, huh? . . . or quite as majestic as mule deer or something.
Ram	He	Wide, thick	He is wide and thick.
Deer	They	Vocal	They are really vocal.
Nilgai	He	Pissed	He's pissed.

Note. This table demonstrates the lexical choices (adjectives) made by the speaker, that attribute human qualities to the non-human animals along with the co-text.

Description:

In simple words, if we have to define anthropomorphism, we can say this is a technique through which human-like characteristics are associated with animals by humans to make the imagery of animals more vivid.

Steven Rinella attaches gendered pronouns and adjectives suited to humans for animals, time and again. For example, as you can see from the table above, that he uses “he” for a deer, buck and ram and “she” for a mule deer. In the same way, he uses a few adjectives that solely belong to humans like the usage of the adjective “funny” for a turkey. For someone who has watched “MeatEater” knows that Steven Rinella himself is not sure about the gender of the animal, he is going to hunt. He assigns gendered pronouns to them frequently in a random manner. Basically, he wants to scrape them off from their natural habitat in which gender pronouns carry no importance. This is the anthropomorphizing of non-human animals through the usage of gender pronouns for them.

This anthropomorphizing technique is not limited to the usage of gendered pronouns for the animals. Human beings tend to assign human-like qualities in the form of adjectives to animals as well. Adjectives are highly dependent on the pronoun being used. Repetitive usage of one kind of an adjective with one kind of a pronoun generalizes that quality for two genders (male and female). These generalizations for human beings are engendered by society and they highly influence our way of thinking. The anthropomorphizing of animals through adjectives in some instances of the season by Steven Rinella is also a result of the usage of language by society.

For example, he sees a “big” and “wide” deer and instantly uses the pronoun “he” for it. In the same way, he uses the adjective “smart” and uses the pronoun “he” for an elk. In yet another episode, he uses the adjectives “wide” and “thick” to describe a ram and the pronoun “he”. This shows that Steven Rinella accepts the common and prevailing notions about genders. In this case, men are usually considered to be smart and strong in comparison to women. He anthropomorphizes the animals, keeping in mind these following notions created by the people.

In the same way, in another episode, for a turkey, he uses the adjective “weak” and the pronoun “she”. Here, he anthropomorphizes the turkey bearing in mind the general accepted perception about women that they are fragile and weak.

It is very interesting to note how Steven Rinella tries to emphasize animal interaction with each other by using the pronoun “they” for them at many points throughout the show. Dickinson (n.d.) writes that an animal’s social attitude is determined by how it interacts with the animals of its own kind and not by how they are distributed in their habitat. This usage of “they” for animals is yet another anthropomorphizing technique as it emphasizes how animals live and behave collectively like humans in small communities and societies.

Our reality depends on our culture. Our culture shapes both our language and perceptions. People from different cultures have different realities that they convey through their language, among other things. Sapir studied the lexical dissections and categorization and grammatical features from the corpora obtained during his fieldwork over several decades. While studying the languages of different North American Indian tribes, including those living in Washington and Oregon in the U.S. and Vancouver in Canada, Sapir found, for example, that the Hopi language did not have lexical equivalents for the English words *time*, *past*, or *the future*. Therefore, he suggested that the Hopi worldview about temporal communication was different from the English worldview. In his lectures Sapir promoted the understanding of language as a system embedded in culture. Thereafter, based on Sapir’s findings, researchers studying language inferred that if there was no word for, say, *you* in a certain language, then speakers of that language treat *you* as non-existent.

Benjamin Lee Whorf, a student of Sapir, later suggested that language could, to some extent, determine the nature of our thinking. Known as the Sapir–Whorf

hypothesis, or linguistic determinism, the notion that language is a shaper of ideas or thought inspired further empirical testing (Whorf, 1952). This led some researchers to conclude that speakers of different languages (e.g., Polish, Chinese, Japanese, English, etc.) see their realities differently. The investigation of the effects of languages on human behavior, as influenced by Sapir's and Whorf's works, continues to be a popular topic in various academic disciplines.

We can therefore say that the language the speaker Steven Rinella uses is 'culturally influenced'. His lexical choices are anthropocentric and the patterns which emerge from his language (sentences/clauses) are summarized here. The general results include all the pronouns, the frequency of which is mentioned above, adjectives and the clauses containing single or multiple instances of the verbs including: comes, does, has, starts, likes, hangs up, helps, decides, gives, wants, finds, settles, goes, looks, chases, distracts, wraps, exemplifies, operates, allows, calls, traps, migrates, picks, prohibits, walks, bully, battle, spend teach, travel, exist, pursue, want, need, feel, know, kill, die, guide, make, anticipate, pick, catch, travel, shoot, keep, knows, moves, smell, spook, think, love, lose, move, spend. But only those verbs are mentioned in the table which are found to be giving a pure anthropomorphic effect.

4.1.2 Anthropomorphic Constructs: Pronouns and Verbs

Table 3

Verbs used to describe the actions of the animals in the MeatEater

Species	Pronoun	Verb	Clause
Fish	He	Got interest	He's got no interest.
Nilgai	He	Walking	He's walking.
Mule Deer	They	Bully	They'll bully you.
Birds	They	Eat	Most birds, when they eat food, they don't chew their food up.
Turkey	He	Camping	He's just camping out up there.
Moose	They	Avoid	They're gonna do their very best to avoid you.

Turkey	He	Played/playing	You can tell that he's played this game before.
Turkey	He	Tease	He's teasing us.
Turkey	He	Shut up	As they get close and start to call, he shuts up.
Turkey	He	Walk	Let him walk.
Buck	He	Distracted	He's distracted by a group of nearby does.
Buck	He	Cruising	He's cruising steadily along a single elevation band.
Buck	He	Settle	He'll settle in and hang out for a while.
Ram	He	Playing	He's just playing.
Elk	They	Like	They don't like when someone's being a copycat.
Squirrel	She	Raises hell	She raises hell to let her hunters know which tree it's in.
Deer	He	Perk up	He perks up his head.

Note. This table demonstrates the lexical choices (verbs) made by the speaker in the TV show MeatEater to refer to the actions of the animals along with the co-text.

Description:

In addition to pronoun and adjective, we can analyze the anthropomorphizing of animals through the verbs associated with pronouns. There are many verbs that are solely used to describe human actions. Steven Rinella anthropomorphizes the animals by associating those verbs with animals at many places in the 'MeatEater'.

For example, in one of the episodes, for a mule deer, Steven Rinella describes his intention with the verb "bullying". Steven Rinella tries his best to place these animals in his own world by doing so. We see bullies in schools and colleges mostly. Bullying is done in human world to establish dominance over the weaker ones. By using the verb bullying for animals, Steven Rinella tries to impress upon the audience that just like humans, there exists a power struggle in non-human animal world as well.

In the same way, he uses the verb “teasing” while describing the action of a turkey. As humans, we tease others as a response to a particular action or just for mere entertainment. Steven Rinella is basically emoting the wild animals just like humans by using such verbs for them. It is natural for human beings to have a unique sense of the actions like “teasing” or the adjectives like “funny” but the animal kingdom lacks these sensibilities. MeatEater glorifies anthropomorphized animals.

Similarly, Rinella uses the verb “like” to describe the feelings of an elk and “camping” to describe the action of a turkey. His choice of lexicons to describe animal behavior raises a few questions like:

- Do animals go through a decision- making process before taking an action?
- Do animals have motivations?
- Do animals have preferences?
- How do animals’ preferences and choice behavior influence humans’ behavior towards them (such as hunting or befriending them)?

From these findings, we can say that the language that Steven Rinella uses for non-human animals, does not make him an expert at making concrete observations about animal behavior as he does not study it empirically. He anthropomorphizes them on the basis of mere inference. Many scholars are on the same page about the fact that anthropomorphism is a manifestation of one’s own inferences (Fisher, 1991; Eddy et al., 1993; Herzog & Galvin, 1997; Mitchell & Hamm, 1997; Silverman, 1997). Steven Rinella equates animals’ behavior with his own mental experiences and then anthropomorphizes them accordingly.

4.2 Traces of Erasure

Sometimes, through language, people omit certain patterns and behaviors to rationalize their actions. Through the lens of critical analysis, linguists study the subtle to no assertiveness of such behaviors. The purpose of erasure in texts may be to keep the perceptions of readers in line with the perceptions of the author or it may be used to simply reinforce one’s culture. Usually through erasure, one’s intention is to mask the negative sides of an action. For example, glorifying the capitalist culture in a text hides the fact that we are destroying our natural resources by consuming more

than our needs. In the same way, a leather industry only shows you what they produce. A consumer does not know what goes behind the stage.

For an accurate analysis of the interaction between humans and their environment, the theory of erasure has been broken down into three level of analysis which are:

- The void
- The mask
- The trace

Stibbe (2014) explains that “the first kind of erasure is ‘the void’, where the natural world is completely omitted by a discourse.” Humans undervalue the importance and significance of their environment in the texts to serve their own interests. The propagation of human agendas usually come at the expense of the ecological world. Man, by nature is sadist. He takes pleasure in inflicting pain, be it on humans, plants, animals, or non-living things.

The second level of erasure deals with the negative aspect of animal husbandry. A man will have hundreds of thousands of reasons to exploit animals for his own benefit and these reasons are smartly communicated in discourses through metaphors. Living animals are frequently compared to machines or a manufacturing unit. The metaphors are so assertive that the readers can only focus upon the need and benefits of this cruel activity. “To create a system which treats animals inhumanely and is environmentally destructive requires work to be done by discourse to erase animals as living beings and focus narrowly on economic factors instead” (Stibbe, 2001; 2003).

The third level of erasure underscores different degrees to which the natural world is erased from a discourse. Through trace, natural world, to some extent is always present in a discourse but the image is always vague. Something from the description and explanation of the natural world is always left out which creates an obscure image of the natural world in the minds of the readers. Of particular importance is ‘the trace’ – when discourses represent the natural world but do so in a way which obscures, leaving a faint trace rather than a vivid image (Stibbe, 2014).

Before applying these levels of Erasure on the actual piece of work “MeatEater”, I will demonstrate the application of Erasure with a simple and small example of a

famous handbag manufacturing company “Louis Vuitton”. For example, in Louis Vuitton commercials, particularly in their “Spirit of Travelling” campaign, erasure has been used to cover their unethical ways of making handbags. Visually, you will notice that all the commercials related to this campaign are environment oriented. You will see women travelling from one place to another. Most of these places are green and advertise nature. We even see a woman caressing a snake. Within, the green images of trees, grass and snake, the element of “trace” has been established. The importance of natural world is shown but in a vague manner. On their official website, they proudly state:

“In all of our workshops, the choice of the finest material, the experience of our craftsmen and the extreme care devoted to each phase of the manufacturing of our products, perpetuate and renew our tradition of excellence and refinement” (Louis Vuitton, 2021).

This one sentence employs the strategy of “void” as it places the consequences of the destructive activities of humans at the back burner. Their so-called “finest” material is acquired through animal skin of which there is no mention here. The devotion of their workers is acknowledged but the deterioration of the natural world is totally overlooked to produce good quality products. Rauturier (2016), an advocate of sustainability critiques Louis Vuitton on ‘Good on You’ and declares them unfriendly for the environment. As far as animal welfare is concerned, “Louis Vuitton is rated ‘Very Poor’ for the animals because of its use of fur, down, leather, wool, exotic animal skin, exotic animal hair, and angora. While it has a general statement about minimizing animal suffering and traces some animal products to the first stage of production, there is no formal animal welfare policy to be seen. Such a blatant disregard for the wellbeing of the sentient creatures we share the planet with is outdated, and with so many vegan fabric innovations out there, using them in such a way simply isn’t necessary anymore! (Rauturier, 2016).”

Machin and Mayr (2012, p. 5) describe being critical as ‘denaturalizing the language to reveal the kinds of ideas, absences, and taken-for-granted assumptions in texts.’ Sometimes the absences in a text are as important as the ideas and assumptions that are actually present. Erasure is where stories in people’s minds treat something as unimportant, marginal, irrelevant, or inconsequential. Through the strategy of Erasure,

the makers of Louis Vuitton render the idea of animal welfare insignificant. Their use of expressions like, “We are passengers”, “I have a destiny”, “The farther I can see, the farther I can go” express a woman’s insatiable urge to travel. These words for a woman, especially are empowering. Naturally, any woman with a love for good handbags will be convinced to buy their products. Though underneath these lexicons hide a cruel reality: man is sabotaging the natural world with his own hands at his own peril.

I have analyzed the series “MeatEater” through the lens of the framework which goes as follows:

- 1) Five characteristics of EDA
- 2) Theory of Erasure:
 - The void
 - The mask
 - The trace
- 3) Ecosophy

The plot of this show makes it an excellent choice to study the relationship between humans and their physical surroundings. A story of an adventurous man who hunts animals not only for the sake of assuaging his hunger but also for the sake of entertainment and pleasure. It would not be wrong to say that he is obsessed with killing animals and birds without paying any heed to the effects of his devastating actions on the natural world. From a linguistics standpoint, the hunter uses such a language that rules out the possibility of any harmony between human and non-human animals. Not only has that, through his language he assigns gendered to the animals that engender from his pre-existing and pre-dominant social and cultural values. In this research, I intend to underscore the devaluation done to animals through language by humans; stripping them far away from their own natural environment and making a counterintuitive attempt to locate them into our own.

4.2.1 The Void: Erasure of the Natural World

This section deals with the analysis of all the episodes of MeatEater through the lens of Ecolinguistics looking for the traces of erasure (The Void).

Hunting techniques have evolved drastically with the evolution of human beings. From African hominins to Homo Erectus to today's Homo Sapiens, man has always been fond of hunting; be it for foraging food or just for recreation, hunting has always been a part of his life. Steven Rinella, the main character of the series reinforces a man's love for hunting when he utters the following words right in the beginning of every episode:

“To me, hunting isn't only about the pursuit of an animal. It's about who we are and what we are made of. I live to hunt and hunt to live (Rinella, 2019).”

Linguistically, the verb “hunt” has been cleverly attached with the nouns of positive connotation such as “pursuit” and “live”. Human passion for their pursuits and their desire to live supersedes the life and desires of animals. By associating “hunting” with positive nouns, the erasure of non-human animals is clearly evident. The negative impact of hunting on the environment has been completely pushed under the rug just to promote human's self-serving desires and interests.

Nobody wants to talk about the devastation that hunting brings to the environment in a discourse like “MeatEater”. This is what is dealt and analyzed in the EDA model. EDA model emphasizes the analysis of issues that have a significant impact on human life. Case in point: the disadvantages of the use of a language that degrade the existence of non-human animals. Moreover, according to EDA, the use of such lexicons engenders a strong cultural code for different communities. Anthropologists suggest that hunting culture started some two million years ago. One can only wonder what kind of language used for animals contributed to the development of this culture.

A man's hunger often leads him to do things that are unspeakable and unthinkable. Food is a man's basic need and those who can afford, will always go an extra mile to fulfil this need and will not prefer anything below average when it comes to food. In one of the episodes of the MeatEater, Steven Rinella meets a wildlife biologist Parker Hall, who for summers, wants to store his freezer with flathead catfish in Missouri River. At one point, Steven inquires why he even likes flatheads. To which he says, “I just think they are delicious”.

It seems, a man, when he looks at an animal, he only wonders what it tastes like. In his speech, he completely erases the contribution of flatheads in the natural

word. He does not talk about their unique pale-yellow color. He does not mention anything as interesting as an ability of a catfish to act as a host for the larvae of freshwater mussel species. He basically reduces the worth of flatheads to a deliciously cooked piece of meat on a plate for humans to eat. The use of a single adjective “delicious” to describe a fish is the erasure of the identity of a flathead catfish and its utility for marine life.

One of the objectives of EDA is to expose the discourses that are ecologically unsound. Through this research, I intend to expose such pieces of texts that put our environment at risk. The selection of the above-mentioned text is in line with the same objective. The idea of doing something for the first time is always thrilling as long as it does not pose any threat to the natural world, however, Steven Rinella’s mantra is quite the opposite. In one of the episodes called, “Turkey Troubles”, *MeatEater* features two first-time hunters Tracy Crane and Maggie Smith. Rinella insists and helps them hunt turkeys into the green hills of Montana. Before venturing out into the hills, one of the girls enthusiastically speaks about turkeys as a first-time hunt. According to her, humans have less emotional-attachment to these animals, and hunting them is a piece of cake in comparison to other animals.

Upon asking about crying on taking a life for the first time, the girls say, there will be tears of joy for meat and tears of sorrow for a life. Steven Rinella, though himself claims confidently that never in his life he has ever seen anyone crying over a turkey. Before they hunt any turkeys, Steven Rinella, cooks one for Tracy and Maggie just to show them “how rewarding success can taste”. Turkeys are not extinct but a man’s desire to hunt and eat them can push towards extinction, and that was the case in the early 1990s due to overhunting. Mitton (2018) writes “with less land for nesting and foraging and unprecedented hunting pressures, populations of turkeys dwindled and then disappeared”. This is especially true with regards to Californian’s excessive love for hunting. Thanks to organizations like the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) who continue to make efforts to save this beautiful bird. By using the adjective, “rewarding” for the successful killing of turkeys, Rinella erases any positive impact of their life on the environment. Instead of killing them, we can take advantage of their sharp sense of sight and smell. They are also known to be intelligent and inquisitive. This love for hunting of turkeys and calling it rewarding have its roots in the cultural discourses of the Western world. Eating turkey on

Thanksgiving became a tradition because of the Pilgrims who brought wildfowl to the table, hence a “cultural code” was formed which is the second most important feature of the EDA. Pharoans (2014) insists on referring to “The Turkey Day” as “45 million Turkeys Get Murdered Day”.

Cultural influences can be very strong and hard to overcome. In one of the episodes of season 9 titled as “Colorado Elk”, Steven Rinella struggles through the strong ripping wind and rival hunters to catch and hunt a muzzleloader elk (a kind of a deer). While looking for elks in Colorado San Juan’s mountains, he narrates a story of a hunter, who got attacked and mauled by a grizzly bear as he was looking for elks to hunt in the same location. Grizzly bears are believed to have gone extinct in 1924. Steven Rinella quotes a hunter and an environmentalist, David Peterson that culturally we were not ready for grizzly bears. Over the course of time, humans developed an “animosity” towards grizzly bears because they mauled and killed the livestock and were dangerous. He uses the word “animosity” to describe how people feel for grizzly bear. This animosity towards grizzly bear was a part of their culture that resulted in their extinction. This shows how culture acts as a key factor in the erasure of non-human animals from the natural world.

Categorization and classification often come with their own sets of drawbacks. All living organisms (plants, animals, and human beings) have been organized and configured on different hierarchical levels, depending upon their abilities and capabilities with human beings taking up the highest and superior position. In the same episode, after a lot of hard work, Steven Rinella manages to shoot an elk but he runs away into the mountains, leaving a trail of its blood for him. As he follows the blood spots of the elk, he uses a condescending adjective “just two teensy...teensy specks of blood”. This shows, as humans, we do not value the blood, soul and life of anyone who stands at any level lower than ours on the pyramid of life. The inhumane attitude towards animals is born out our own sense of superiority over them. Human beings placed at the highest level of life entrusts them with an immense power that unfortunately we will never be able to use constructively and wisely. For a hunter like Steven Rinella, this sense of superiority and power deprives him of any doubt and remorse in harming animals; for him, they are nothing but an insignificant existence. Given the opportunity, he would rather use this power to erase them entirely from the natural world.

As promulgated by the model of EDA, the idea of Ecosophy should be circulated and practiced within human beings. Ecosophy aims to promote humane interactions between human beings and non-human animals. It aims to set limits on the power that human beings possess. It will dictate the extent to which animals should be conserved and hunted.

One encounters numerous contradictions between what Steven Rinella says and does. For example, in one of the episodes titled as, “Alaska Moose: The Guide Life”, Steven Rinella goes out to hunt moose somewhere close to Alaska River with an outfitter Buck Bowden. Buck guides him how to hunt this animal. Steven shows his admiration for Buck in an extremely contradictory language. In simple words, he says he reveres him as his does with “a big heart and a deep, deep love of nature.” This very line underscores the sheer hypocrisy of human nature. One may assume that whatever a man loves, he kills it or man loves the nature around him in such a manner that he makes it feel vulnerable. These contradictions make up a big part of this show. He rationalizes the grotesque act of killing by associating adjectives like “deep” with the love of nature, though deep down, he knows whatever he does, in no way helps in conserving wildlife and consequently, nature.

Moreover, instead of categorizing human heart as cruel and cold, he considers it a rather brave and bold feat to hunt. The truth is that a human heart has a tendency to easily turn cold for a human like him, let alone any creature that is inferior to him biologically, naturally or socially. Stibbe’s EDA model plays the role of a savior in this scenario as it helps uncover such devastating activities of humans that do not match what they preach out loud. On another occasion in the same episode, Buck while narrating how he started hunting in the first place says:

“I have his life in my hands. I felt powerful.”

There are two choices for a man who possesses power: use it or abuse it. Unfortunately, when it comes to having power over non-humane animals, man always chooses to abuse his power by hunting them to satisfy his own hunger. The intensity of a man’s power results in the erasure of all these non-humane animals from the natural world. Human beings, being labelled as superior beings, tend to act as demi-gods on earth. They believe anything inferior to them is dependent on them and they leave no stone unturned to exploit that creature for their own benefit. This exercise of

power is also demonstrated in of the episodes, titled as, “Walking the Clouds” where Steven is telling his fellow hunter how humans can name animals after themselves. For example, “Steller’s jay, Steller’s sea lion” or “Steven’s bird”. This naming of animals after human beings shows the extent of possessions, human beings believe they have on animals.

In the episode called, “Blue Mountain Bugles”, Steven Rinella, time and again refers to hunting white sheep as “fun”. When an activity like hunting is done for mere recreation, the erasure of the wildlife from the discourse becomes indispensable and their extinction from our world becomes inevitable. This is the reason why the model of EDA encourages and stresses upon having a benchmark to judge the perceptions and worldviews regarding ecological activities. Humans, through a certain standard are expected to reach some moderation with regards to their actions towards the animals and the overall environment for the better future of mother earth.

Not just adjectives, Steven Rinella also associates negative verbs with the actions of animals. For example, in the episode, “Ghost of Chesapeake Part 1”, when a male stag is playfully running after a female stag, he uses the verb, “harassing” to describe it. Moreover, when they are bleating in the field, which is what they naturally do, Steven says “they are making a racket”. There is a purpose for using verbs for natural reactions of animals to their environment and that is to instigate the viewers to hunt them, and the use of such lexicons also justify his own actions. This is the erasure of the natural responses of animals. It is natural for an animal to run freely in a field after an animal of its own kind. It is natural for an animal to bleat, howl or roar. By using such words, Steven Rinella attempts to erase their inherent capabilities which are totally harmless to him. In fact, it is other way round. It is Steven Rinella himself who is harassing them who lands on their territory like an uninvited guest with an intention to kill them.

This universe is a web of countless human desires. Human lust and avarice encompass the entire universe. It is one of the seven deadly sins; a sin, a man can hardly ever overcome. A man always chooses, “more and more” over “less is more” mantra. This is what we see Steven Rinella doing in the “MeatEater”. Not just meat, the worth of an animal’s skeleton is equally important somewhere at the back of his mind. For example, in the episode, “South Texas Nilgai”, he looks for an unusual

looking antelope, Nilgai. Before butchering this animal, Steven asks his fellow hunter about the value of its carcass which turns out to be extremely “valuable”. This shows, that as he plans on hunting animals, he not only thinks in terms of hunger but also in terms of business. He not only thinks about meat, but also about the money he can make out of an animal. In short, human greed has no end.

This in a true sense is the erasure of an entire animal from the nature. From talking about how strange looking these antelopes are to drooling over its meat to talking about the value of its carcass in the market, Steven Rinella, only compounds the issue by turning hunting into a lucrative activity. He makes sure people hunt this antelope for money, if not for meat. EDA model, in this regard, helps educate the masses about the relationship between the destructive language and its impact on the natural world. Through my research, I intend to make people cautious with their words, particularly with regards to nature.

4.2.2 The Mask: Disguising the Bitter Realities

Ecolinguistics mostly examines the discourses of environmentalism and scientific ecology, discussing their tones and hidden messages, and how these messages can influence the goals of the organizations or disciplines that use them (Alexander, 2010; Harré et al, 1999; Stibbe, 2005). This section deals with the analysis of all the episodes of MeatEater through the lens of Ecolinguistics looking for the traces of erasure (The mask).

Baudrillard (1994) identifies the following hierarchy of representation for this form of erasure (The mask):

- This image represents a reality that is both profound and significant.
- The picture covers and distorts a fundamental truth.
- The picture hides the presence of a meaningful reality.
- This image has no connection to reality at all; it is completely artificial.

The first of these layers represents reality in a direct way without erasing anything. The researcher believes that the instances for this level do not really exist in the show for the animals primarily. The only things that are portrayed without any erasure are the human needs, primarily the act of “foraging”. Foraging entails scavenging and hunting food, as well as picking wild herbs and gathering small

animals, birds, and insects. Foraging is similar to hunting and gathering. Our daily lives revolve around mass-produced food, marketplaces, and restaurants, as well as enormous supermarket complexes that are often just down the road. This makes it difficult to picture how we might obtain food in the natural environment daily. According to the Khan Academy, even though the world was theirs, human beings (*Homo sapiens*) went against the grain and were surprisingly passive during most of their 200,000-year existence on Earth. Starting around 11,000 years ago, their agricultural revolution changed everything. It was millions of years before *Homo sapiens* emerged that our hominine ancestors foraged for food. In the world of today where humans are producing their own food, growing their own crops, and raising their own cattle, running their own poultries, foraging is now not required for human survival. So, it can be said that the term “foraging” has now evolved to what we call now as “hunting”. It wouldn’t be wrong to say that hunting has become a luxury nowadays, people who hunt are usually those who have enough food on their tables, but they hunt just for fun and adventure. Here we can take the example of the prologue to every episode of the season where the speaker “Steven Rinella” says:

“To me hunting isn’t only about the pursuit of an animal,

It’s about who we are and what we’re made of.

I live to hunt and hunt to live.

I am a meat eater” (Meateater, Season 9 part 1).

He refers to the fact that foraging has been a part of human lives for years but erases the fact that the need for it has long gone due to the scientific advancement. “I live to hunt and hunt to live” is paradoxical in nature. When you live for something that means doing so is your passion and you love to do that thing. This thing is true in this context. The presenter really is passionate about hunting, but does he really hunt to live? When there’s enough in the world to feed everyone’s need it would be baseless to say that someone’s is invading the natural ecosystem and hunting down animals just to live or to survive. He further says:

“Will have some great food for our families

.

.

for months ahead.”

This food haul can lead to the extinction of a rare species. The mask of food requirement here is used to conceal the act of over hunting the ducks in South Dakota. The fact that humans do need food to survive is totally understandable but them storing their refrigerators with tons of hunted animal that could've been a source of multiplication of food not just for humans and other animals in the future is ignored here, which is clearly greed and not the need.

The second level of the mask which is: “The image masks and denatures a profound reality” cannot be ignored here because of the multiple instances for this form of erasure found in the speech of the speaker. This level implies the erasure of something important that is represented in discourse but under a mask, which obscures its true nature.

“I don't mind killing him.

.
.

You wanna kill him?

.
.

The fish is probably really anxiously waiting for the verdict here.

.
.

They're just beautiful, amazing animals, man.

And I've come to respect and love them.”

The speaker here is masking the existence of animals in their natural habitat as the existence of animals as a source of human pleasure. As if the life of animals is a puppet in human hands and the humans have a right to invade the animal habitats and kill them because they are made for human use. Animal behavior is portrayed in a way that animals too have this in mind that humans are their masters and that they must wait for humans to decide whether they'll let them live or cut them open for their lustful needs. The latter half of the text stated above is just a play of words. It can be perceived in two ways, either it is said in terms of amusement or in terms of mockery to the non-human animals. The fact that humans are paying heed to them

(even if they're doing so by killing them) is what he means by saying that he's come to respect and love them.

Another instance is as follows, while referring to the crabs:

“And then you take his claw off him.

.

.

You grip them, and you just take it off,

Put them back.

They live and they grow a new claw.”

Here the act of cruelty is masked as an act of referring to the natural phenomenon of “regeneration” where animals regrow the mutilated parts of their bodies.

According to the characteristics of the EDA model (Stibbe, 2014), these issues can substantially have an impact on people's minds, attitudes, and behavior. By showing and exposing them to such brutal practices masked as something very normal and non-problematic, we're brainwashing our masses into believing and practicing all these norms and stories. Stories that stress upon the fact that animals are subordinate, and they have no justified reason of existence on their own rather they're here just to support humans for their survival. These practices are creating a “worldview” which Nuri (2012) calls as a “cultural code” that humans have a right to exploit all the other non-human entities. This cultural code needs to be questioned here. Why do humans have this urge to control everything surrounding them? The EDA model questions such stories and mindsets and looks for better alternatives. The lexical choices of the speaker can bring a positive change in the cultural codes if made right. Being a mainstream personality, he should rather be choosing such diction which promotes a healthy relationship between nature and humans and not the one that aims at harming the ecological balance.

The audiences' feedback and comments on the IMDb original website (see Appendix A) serve as a proof that the lexical choices and the actions of the speaker have created a “worldview” which has normalized hunting as a healthy practice in the human society.

Let's have a look at another example here:

“The bulls are gonna be acting especially reckless.

It’s not so much a hunt as it is a harvest.

.
.

What preys on these things? Nothing.”

The speaker refers to the abundant existence of bulls in South Texas and tells the audience that no one hunts in this specific area. He then masks the cruel practice of hunting as a natural phenomenon of “harvesting”. His choice of words reflects that these existing animals should be hunted down just like the grown crops are harvested to fulfil the food requirements. But he is hereby erasing the importance of animals in their natural context. If we look at the natural ecosystem and the food chain, unlike the human kingdom, all the species of the animal kingdom are dependent on each other for their existence and survival. Humans, if keep on hunting and killing animals for their joy, would disrupt the flow of the natural food chain. A good balance of animal and marine species is critical to ensuring a healthy environment for humans. Every organism on this planet has a distinctive role in the food chain, and each one’s participation in the ecosystem is distinctive. Food webs and food chains define the ecological system. Even if only one species of wildlife becomes extinct from the ecosystem, it can affect the entire food chain, which may have catastrophic consequences. The presenter along with his friends hunts down a Nilgai and then gives a justification that the animal would’ve been killed one way or the other had they spared him. By saying that the bears, the coyotes etc. would’ve killed and eaten it they’re trying to mask their cruelty as an act of favor to the animal for saving him from another attack where its body would be lying wasted being fed by the little animals and birds. But it should be known to them that this is how the other animals survive. They hunt down other animals to live and what they are doing is for fun and adventure and not for survival. Hunting can result in the extinction of one species which may result in extinction of another because if that is what they were feeding upon to survive, hunting basically would end their source of existence. According to the third characteristic of the EDA model, we should be questioning such worldviews that promote a threat to the ecology. Humans should be calculated in their acts of utilizing the natural resources. Over utilization of these resources is more like eating our own skin because humans are dependent on nature for their existence and this

holistic understanding of humans reliance on interaction with other organisms needs to be highlighted.

*“When you hunt an animal,
It helps to know someone*

.
.

*I like to cut them,
Like, all the way up to the last rib.”*

.

“That’s really cool man”.

The same phenomenon of erasure is existent in this chunk too where the speaker masks his act of animal cruelty as something called the “scientific knowledge”. This issue is addressed by the fourth characteristic of the EDA model which brings to highlight the destructive discourses. The speaker proudly shows the whole process of cutting the animal open to the last rib on screen. From taking out its skin to its heart and to its tongue. He refers to the process as really enjoyable. This is an example of the third level of (the mask) where one picture is used to hide the presence of another meaningful reality. Such behavior is ecologically destructive and unsound. If humans need to understand the animal body and structure they can use dead animals for study and research purposes but invading a natural ecosystem and targeting beautiful and healthy animals is just not acceptable. Humans should be looking for positive and more eco-friendly alternatives to their needs.

Glenn (2004) says that one way to help agriculture industry workers remove themselves from the impact of severe confinement methods on animal health and the environment is to create masks that cover the nature of the animals in the meat business. Similar instances are found in the selected sample where the speaker masks the cruel process of hunting as something much needed to maintain the healthy balance of the natural ecosystem. He says:

“Fewer, more healthy animals could be better than tons of vulnerable, starving ones”.

The use of such language explicitly encourages the readers to think that hunting is a healthy practice and that it should be adopted to maintain the existence of healthy animals only, eliminating the ones that aren't healthy. The EDA model questions such cultural codes and discourses. Who sets a standard of for a "healthy animal"? How do we define a healthy animal and who are we to define a healthy animal? These are just some foul lexical constructs that justify the ill practices of humans. In order to mask our acts of malice, we need a softer, much acceptable story that would euphemize the real brutal act.

"That was a sweet hunt".

Referring to the first and second characteristic of the EDA model and the third level of the mask, the phrase "sweet hunt" needs consideration. It is creating a cultural code, a code that promotes and normalizes hunting by giving it a sweet touch. How is this working for the well-being of the population? According to the EDA model, such behavior does not only impact how humans treat other non-human entities but also impacts how they treat each other. During the debate over the morality of hunting, someone always brings up the point that all preindustrial human communities have practiced hunting to some degree, which means that hunting is natural and hence morally acceptable. While the idea of naturalness is of no assistance, it is ultimately immaterial. The Stoics in ancient Greece taught us to live in line with nature and to act in a natural way. While the word "natural" is still used today to sell products and lifestyles, this idea continues as many people are still under the impression that natural means good. Although all things natural are generally assumed to be healthy, moral goodness is also implied. Once the difficulty of defining "nature" and "natural" is put aside, it is unwise to conclude that anything is good or permitted only because it is natural. We can here deduce the fact that if such brutal practices are normalized in society, humans can end up killing other humans too.

"For baseball, it's like your bat is the last thing

.
.

Your rifle probably is the last thing. . for hunting".

This instance can be taken as an example of the second level of the mask where a picture covers and distorts a fundamental truth. Here, speaker is noted to be

drawing comparisons between “hunting” and the game of “baseball”. The two are completely opposite in nature. No one loses his life in the baseball. This act of distorting the true reality of a ruthless act by highlighting similarities between it and a much simpler game somehow makes it sound very normal. The act of killing is disguised as a game. A question arises here. Why is hunting a recreational activity many prefer? Gary Varner, a prominent environmental philosophy, outlines three sorts of hunting: therapeutic, sustenance, and sport. Every type is defined by its intended use. Hunters must be able to kill wild animals to help preserve the species or its habitat. Project Isabella was one of the conservation efforts that included hiring sharpshooters to kill thousands of wild goats in the Galápagos Islands between 1997 and 2006. The goats have the potential to devastate the islands' fragile ecosystem by completely overgrazing them, which might lead to the endangerment of the endangered Galápagos tortoises and other species.

Subsistence hunting is a purposeful act of killing wild animals for humans to eat and use for their own purposes. Hunting whales is a practice that has historically benefited many tribal communities, and several agreements permitting this activity have a valid foundation in that fact. Sport hunting, on the other hand, describes the practice of deliberately killing animals for amusement or personal fulfilment. Those that go deer hunting for the thrill of the hunt or to collect antlers to put on the wall are sport hunters (Duclos, 2017).

Humans are known to be the “invasive species”. While there's no single definition for invasive species, we can draw on these criteria to define humans as an invasive species. Invasiveness can be characterized by the fact that humans are everywhere: roaming the planet's continents, living on its oceans, and flying in the air (Zielinski, 2011). This selected sample has numerous examples that back the above following standpoint.

“How many times ... been attacked by bears?”

It is a fundamental truth that animals don't attack unless they're triggered by human beings. The speaker here has slanted the fact that the incident he is narrating is of his hunting experience where he himself invaded the natural habitat of the animal and triggered him, the spooked animal had no other choice but to self-defense which he perceived as an attack.

While it is true that hunting causes injury to innocent species, it is immoral in Ecologist's opinions because of the purpose to do harm. It is worth noting that even people who are reluctant to extend legal rights to creatures have to admit that many animals have sentience, or the ability to feel pain. When a sentient thing suffers suffering and death because it was unwanted, then the same occurs when hunting. If the criticism is sound, then it means opponents of hunting must reject all three sorts of hunting until it can be proven that a hunt is needed to prevent the animal from dying a protracted death of famine over the winter. Hunters are shooting or trapping and killing animals for their own reasons, whether it's to eat a healthy meal, have a satisfying adventure, or advance a healthy ecology. Regardless of their objectives, the hunted animals suffer the same harms (Duclos, 2017). In one of the episodes of the selected sample, the speaker while referring to the sea creatures, says:

“Boy it’s loaded right here.”

“Darkness is coming and I’m worried about potential meat spoiling.”

He uses the following lexical construction which implies that if he doesn't catch them, they'll go to waste as an excuse of catching abundant sea creatures and hoarding them in freezers rather than letting the ecological harmony be maintained. These resources include the air, water, soil, minerals, plants, and animals of the Earth. The concept of conservation is the practice of caring for these resources so that they may be available for all living creatures today and in the future. We require food, water, air, and shelter, and all these things originate from natural resources. As said, some of these materials, such as plants and animals can be replenished easily once they are over utilized. When used up extremely, these resources are gone for good. The over hunting of animals is a big problem. By clearing forests, you expose land to the elements. The land is barren and erodes due to bad farming techniques. Gas supplies are used up. Drinking water and air pollution are widespread. If resources are badly managed, all of them will be exhausted. All these demands are genuine, however local plant and animal species are frequently overlooked. The advantages of development must be measured but the harm to animals, the loss of future resources or damage to existing resources should be considered as well.

In one of the episodes of the selected sample, the speaker says:

“I’ve seen many first-time hunters cry over deer, cry over caribou.”

He tries to show that the hunters are saddened by the fact that the animal they killed, just died and they are unable to save it. But, most hunters do not regret having done the deed. They believe that the thing they do is merciful because many of the creatures hunted by humans meet their end at the teeth of a wild predator.

“Like if that animal dies any other way, besides involvement with a human, it’s most likely gonna be worse.”

They are not likely to perish from old age since once they grow weak and slow, they become an easier prey. But they will either die instantaneously or within seconds if the hunters use their guns to kill them. The animals’ demise is much more painful when it is ripped apart by a feral predator whereas the only pain they feel while I hunt is a few seconds of suffering. He masks the brutal act of hunting by giving justification like animals hold his respect. *“They’re just beautiful, amazing animals, man. And I’ve come to respect and love them.”* Whereas the truth is that he just wants to collect meat, experience the sensation and feel powerful for having someone’s life in his hand. *“Somebody out there depends on me. I have his life in my hands. I felt powerful”*

The answers given by the hunters in response to the question posted on Quora.com about how they feel after hunting down the animals serve as a proof of how there’s no emotional bonding between the hunters and the animals they hunt. (See Appendix B) Had there been any emotional attachment, there wouldn’t be any such concept as “hunting” in the first place. This is how deletion and erasure of animals has taken place on numerous levels in the selected sample. Sentences and phrases are sanitized and slanted by several linguistic techniques like as metaphors, metonymies, nominalizations, and hyponyms. If you remove key words from numerous phrases, it can accumulate and result in a lack of relevant material across the text. And so, it is the erasure of "something vital" from the discourse that is key, because discourses are what make up the society we live in. Erasure here encompasses the environment, as well as an important discourse, which encodes a certain worldview.

4.2.3 The Trace: Distorted Representation

Discourses continually erase what they describe, but they do so to varying degrees. Another sort of erasure that we term “the trace” happens when discussions

about significant things manage to make them seem less essential by speaking of them in a vague, weak, or abstract way (Stibbe, 2014). He further adds that the picture shows the pencil marks being erased while the indentations on the page still show the traces of their earlier presence. Depending on how well the ideas in the discussion are illustrated, the 'trace' can be powerful or weak. This section deals with the analysis of all the episodes of MeatEater through the lens of Ecolinguistic Discourse Analysis looking for the traces of erasure (The Trace).

Stibbe (2014) further says that any discussion of ecology must, of course, address the animals, plants, and environment. It's hard to believe, but it's important to recognize that erasure isn't a black-and-white concept and can occur to varied degrees. A significant matter is the trace - when discourses depict the natural world but do so in a way that is vague and indistinct, instead of vibrant and direct.

Following instances of trace have been found in the selected sample:

“Undoubtedly we lost some meat.”

While talking about the animal (bull), the speaker does not use the name or even the word “animal” rather he uses the word “meat” to refer to the animal. The speaker’s lexical choices eliminate animals from the world of consideration masking them into something feeble and hard to inspire imagination or care. A similar is example is mentioned below:

“And then I spit them in half,

.

.

So that back fin meat is like primo jumbo limp.

“We’re gonna take the front shoulder, front right shoulder.

We’re gonna make burger out of it...

Hamburger out of it.”

The animal description given in the statements follow a realistic portrayal since they are easy to picture. However, there is no direct reference to the species. It is portrayed as nothing more than mere pieces of flesh and meat. This description

doesn't give the clear description of the exact shape, color, texture of the skin etc. of the alive species, therefore, as usual, some erasure is in effect.

“You hunted deer meat for leather

..

You hunted bear ‘cause you wanted the fat and meat.”

The various ways animals are unnecessarily exploited for human advantage include wool, silk, leather, feather, suede, fur and ivory etc. As it turns out, people do not need these items and can even use cruelty-free alternatives. Some of these products don't require such an explanation because their nature is self-evident. The term skin, of course, refers to leather, suede, and fur, which come from the back of an animal. None of these approaches are appropriate or necessary. Despite these few examples, there are many other ways in which human greed has contributed to the mistreatment and exploitation of other animals. We take advantage of animals for our entertainment in various ways, including races, circuses, aquariums, and zoos. But the greed doesn't just end here. Humans not only just mistreat them but also try to cover up their ill deeds and totally erase the animals out of their natural context, leaving behind only the faint traces.

To sum up, despite the passing of time, hunting is still a method to demonstrate authority. It is considered a lavish sport conducted primarily by humans. Humans mostly hunt and bring back animal remains (Ivory, horns, skin etc.) as trophies and consider it a luxury that is associated with colonialism and patriarchy. The data analysis proves that the use of anthropocentric language serves as a medium of portraying animals as an exploitable commodity by erasing them out of their natural environment and placing them in the human kingdom by twisting the reality, distorting the truth, creating selfish ‘worldviews’.

4.3 Findings and Discussion

The main findings of the study are presented below, leading to a discussion on those findings.

4.3.1 Research Findings

The aim of my research was to examine the anthropomorphic constructs such as gendered pronouns, adjectives and verbs in the show “The MeatEater”. After analyzing the data, it is safe to say, that my analysis answers the first question of my research successfully.

- 1) The speaker uses gendered pronouns (He, She and Them) to refer to the animals. The basic quantification of the pronouns is as follows: 438, 28 and 429 respectively. These pronouns have been examined in relation to the adjectives and verbs used with them. My findings reveal that for masculine pronouns, the narrator uses adjectives which ooze strength. This shows that his choice of adjectives in relation to the pronouns are somewhat socially influenced. For example,

“Shoot that duck. He is bulletproof.” (For a duck)

“He just lingered...He’s smart.” (For an elk)

- 2) The lexical items for masculine pronouns like “bulletproof” and “smart” depict the role of these lexical words and also answer the question of my research which is that the speaker has carefully chosen the words for the pronouns he used. He makes sure the qualities associated with these animals are human like, and also in line with the societal constructs. In the same way, he says:

“They are funny.” (For a Turkey)

“You can look in their eyes. You can see, there’s a bit of gentleness and kindness there.” (For Deers)

- 3) The speaker frequently uses gendered pronouns for these wild animals and erases them from the environment. Moreover, he uses adjectives like “gentleness” and “kindness” for animals which are human-like characteristics. This anthropomorphism is not restricted to the adjectives only. My findings also answer the question of the use of anthropomorphism in terms of using “verbs” with “pronouns”. For example, the speaker says:

“They’ll bully you.” (For Mule Deer)

“He’s just camping out up there.” (For a Turkey)

These examples illustrate that the animals have been anthropomorphized through both verbs and adjectives. The lexical choices such as “bully” and “camping” are the verbs associated with the activities of humans.

- 4) In the same way, my analysis has been successful in answering the second question of my research. My analysis shows that the speaker has frequently used words that promote the killing and hunting of wild animals. For example, the speaker repeatedly uses phrases like:

“I live to hunt. I hunt to live.”

“I think, they are delicious.”

After hunting the animals, he cooks it and says:

“..... how rewarding success can taste.”

Phrases like “live to hunt and hunt to live”, words like “delicious” and “rewarding” encourage people to kill animals and thus promote erasure of the animals from the environment. These words have been used to serve Steven Rinella’s own interests and presents hunting as a healthy activity for humans and environment. In the same way, he says:

“I have his life in my hands. I felt powerful.”

The choice of lexical items in this line shows that killing animals gives man power over non-humane animals. He encourages his audience to hunt as according to him, through this sport, a man can assert his dominance over nature.

- 5) My findings reveal that hunters like Steven Rinella are unapologetically trying to erase the importance of wild animals from the minds of common human beings and that all the categories of erasure (Void, Mask and the Trace) are present in the ‘MeatEater’.

Moreover, according to my findings it is noted that our language is in a close relationship with the ecosystem and if not used properly, it has drastic impacts on the environment. Steven Rinella has frequently oppressed wildlife with his language. Language is conveniently used to oppress the environment. Roche (2019) says, that according to some scholars have defined the term “language oppression” as the

imposition of language loss by mental, cultural, physical, social and spiritual intimidation (Roche, 2019).

- 6) My findings also reveal that animals are only perceived as meat by human beings. They are both commercialized and massified by human beings for their own benefits. Cook (2015) writes that in modern society, the importance of animals has been erased from the life of a man. They are commonly viewed only as meat, pest or as secondary characters in fiction and documentaries; yet the human-animal interaction is a serious environmental and social concern (Cook, 2015).
- 7) The speaker of the show, Steven Rinella makes unethical comments about the animals. The instances are as follows: “*Son/Sons of bitch/bitches*”, “*He has a nice ass*”. He tries to sexualize and belittle the animals by making such comments.
- 8) The analysis of my research proves the fact that anthropomorphism leads to anthropocentric mindsets by analyzing the public feedback on the show. A thematic analysis of the comments proved that shows like ‘MeatEater’ promote animal cruelty and hunting and that people actually start believing in harmful and destructive ‘stories’ after watching the ‘nature fakery’.

4.3.2 Discussion

After listing down the findings, the researcher has interpreted the findings with reference to other sources in the given section and it can be concluded that the present research successfully achieved all the primary objectives.

Firstly, my research identifies all the anthropomorphic lexical choices that produce an anthropocentric effect. Even though some researchers look at grammatical patterns (see below), the main aim of this type of research is usually lexical – looking at the nouns, verbs, and adjectives that label different species as well as their actions and behaviour (Sealey & Oakley, 2013). All the lexical items were highlighted using AntConc software and their frequency was also measured. These lexical choices demonstrated that it is inevitable to avoid using anthropomorphic language for animals by human beings. It is not just our biological tendencies that lead humans to use such a language for animals, but it also has its roots in our cultural setting. It has

been defined that using human-like language to describe animals is unpreventable; some commentators believe that anthropomorphism is "probably conditioned into us biologically as well as culturally injected" (Kennedy, 1992, p.167).

Secondly, since it is a mixed method approach, I was successful in measuring the frequency of the gendered pronouns (he, she, they) used to humanize animals by the speaker in *MeatEater*. These third-person pronouns play an integral role in promoting the erasure of animals. We contend that the grammatical category of pronouns plays a role in the "humanization" of the creatures in these discourses. This happens when a creature's gendered pronoun choice encourages an individualised, active, and "socially" contextualised portrayal. The interaction of pronouns with verbs denoting evaluations, choices, and plans amplifies the effect (Sealey & Oakley, 2013). The third objective of my research has been fulfilled by successfully identifying all the types of erasure in *MeatEater* using EDA by Stibbe. By using gendered pronouns and associating human-like actions to animals, Steven Rinella was successful in erasing the animals from the ecosystem which is pertinent to our environment. Discursive erasure is a term used frequently in social science to describe the absence of something essential - something which is present in real life but is overlooked or completely disregarded in a particular context (Stibbe, 2014). In the same way, Steve Rinella masks the true reality of living animals by using anthropomorphic language, thus, treating them like objects of economic gains. There are also a variety of ways in which business discourse erases animals by applying vocabulary that is generally used for objects to living beings (Stibbe, 2014). In addition to this, the complete erasure of the animals has been observed and analyzed when they human beings are portrayed as heavily dependent for food, leisure, and money on their ecosystem, thus employing the strategy of void. Handling the living world as a stock of objects erases (from consciousness) what makes life unique, such as interaction and interconnectedness, which is, oddly, what ecology is all about (Stibbe, 2014). Lastly, audience feedback about portrayal of animals in such a way has been gathered through two authentic websites i.e., IMBD and Quora.com. These feedbacks support my take on this show as these feedbacks invoke the love of hunting in those who have not hunted even once in their lifetime. It also encourages the audience to view these wild animals as a mere commodity.

The results/findings of the study indicate that the speaker uses anthropomorphic language which leads to anthropocentrism and eventually strips the animals of their natural reality. The speaker uses gendered pronouns (he, she, they) for the animals which places them in the human paradigm and ultimately leads to their erasure. This erasure is not noticed just on word level but on sentence level. The phraseology that the speaker has made use of in the show is truly biased in favor of human interests. The gendered pronouns when combined with the adjectives and verbs used for the animals in consideration produce an anthropocentric effect. The study demonstrates a correlation between anthropomorphism and erasure by building a bridge between the two, highlighting the anthropocentric lexical choices first and then studying the effect they produce by analyzing the co-text. This analysis supports the theory that human language, which is obviously designed by humans, portrays everything in the world through human viewpoints. However, the issues raised in the present study necessitate us to turn our attention to the “linguistic construal lens” so that we can look at the world and other creatures through the “empathy hierarchy” (Langacker, 1991). The data suggests that as a society, we must work hard to find new ways to deal with the limitations of our human perceptions. The findings of the present study are in line with Sealey and Oakley’s (2013) who believe that the world has always been a subject of different depictions and contradictions considering humans as the focal point of observations. Therefore, it has been highlighted that the use of certain grammatical patterns; pronouns, infinitive forms etc. plays a significant role in presenting the huge number of species that are represented through different channels and platforms, mainly the wildlife documentaries and films. They say that when using English language as a medium of arbitration between the television viewer and denizens of ‘the natural world’, the wildlife broadcasters have a variety of options to choose from. The studies differ in the aspect that Sealey and Oakley (2013) have considered only the frequency of certain lexical items and not the negative outcomes they lead to. They have also ended their study on a note that these lexical choices cannot be neutral, and that they will inevitably carry cultural and even ideological connotations, but the present study focuses on criticizing the use of these lexical choices and insists on finding better alternatives. The main argument of the present research is also supported by Stibbe (2015) who argues that attributing human like qualities of thinking and managing risks erases animals, shows them as inferior and allows the benefits to float with the dominant group i-e the humans.

The findings of the current study, however, contradict the claims of Adcroft (2010) who asserts that anthropomorphism is often misconceived and that it doesn't marginalize the animals rather gives them a higher rank. He further states that anthropomorphism is a source of entertainment and inspiration for the masses and that it creates a sympathy in the minds of humans for animals. I personally see this stance as the one holding anthropomorphic effect. Humans believe that if they attribute human qualities to the animals, it will give animals a higher rank; this directly implies that humans do think highly of themselves and believe that they have a right to exploit the animals and other non-human entities. He is right to some extent when he says that filming animals creates harmony between the human and animal world but that can be done by keeping the animals in their natural habitat. There's no need to place them in a setting completely unknown to them just to make the humans understand their behavior because we humans would never be able to understand what animals do and why they do so. They have their own cognitive and behavioral system and that is quite justified because they are not humans.

The remarks and the feedback of the audience on other wildlife documentaries and films like "*March of the Penguins*" show that the attribution of human qualities to the animals can be used to manipulate religion or politics (Sealey & Oakley, 2013). They further state that the fundamentalist Christians employed anthropomorphism for the Christian pilgrimage and validated their causes through the scientific basis of this film. The filmmakers stated that their intentions were misunderstood, and therefore they were at a loss as to how their movie may be perceived. The film, which is viewed by so many people, can be interpreted in numerous ways. The producers state that March's narrative and characterization were carefully designed to grab the attention of audiences, regardless of their political or religious views, and that they were doing it to raise awareness of the Antarctic environment and the Emperor Penguin species. It is apparent that animals were used to give the feeling of a humanlike character to entice consumers to buy broadcast time on cable television. Long-running shows like "*Meerkat Manor*" and "*Orangutan Island*" utilize personification and characterization to engage fans and make sure they will stick around. This formula reflects how TV shows are mostly viewed as a means of entertainment that focus on ratings. Supporters of anthropomorphism such as Adcroft (2010) might suggest that such films have made previously unknown species more relatable and have inspired people

to take more action to save them. However, based on the findings of similar studies like Molly (2006) prove that anthropomorphism is intrinsically bound to change human/non-human animal difference structures. In particular, she has claimed that these configurations of knowledge/discourse involve distribution of power with material consequences for human and non-human animals. So, a more plausible explanation can be that if we are expecting some people to be inspired and save the species, some might feel the urge to capture and hunt those species. Not everybody perceives a situation in the same way, there's always some black with the white.

Even though there may be an apparent disconnect between what the animals experience and how we describe it, language cannot be separated from the species responsible for it, and thus in this case, it doesn't seem accurate for humans to be making inferences about the behavior of non-human animals. This viewpoint is supported by Burt (2000) and Servais (2018) who say that the powerful tool of "anthropomorphism" uses the mental qualities of humans as a lens to view animals. Like the present study, they also insist that the use of anthropocentric language can lead to erasure and affect the ecology and nature.

The difficulty in explaining animals' behavior may have less to do with anthropomorphism, as we are automatically compelled to anthropomorphize everything we encounter, from bears to antelopes to fish. What we encounter, on the other hand, may be restricted by anthropocentrism. "If a lion could speak, we could not understand him" (Wittgenstein, 2007, as cited in Sealey & Oakley, 2013). We most likely are not able to anticipate the motives and behavior of the animals. For example, In the wildlife Tv series "MeatEater", in one of the episodes of the selected sample named "Blue Mountain Bugles" the speaker says, "*And we'll never understand why he does what he does?*" while talking about the animal in consideration (bull). Humans do know that they would never be able to understand the behavior and motives of animals so trying to make false interpretations would obviously be wrong. One of the findings of the present study is that the nature/wildlife documentaries are fake and pretentious. All the "drama" and the dubious animal behavior shown on screen is to increase the ratings of these shows by the makers. The validity of this finding can be supported by the claims of (Sider, 2019; Stibbe, 2015; Cáceres, 2019; Vilasco, 2018; Chen et al., 2017) who suggest that anthropomorphism

has a positive effect on consumer responses to anthropomorphic motivations. Anthropomorphism generally provides marketers with a powerful tool as it allows consumers to connect to brands and social causes. So, it wouldn't be wrong to say that humans are selfish creatures with a lustful mindset that compels them to control everything around them, be it living or non-living. The misrepresentation of animals by the humans is leading to their erasure as claimed by Stibbe (2012). Animals are constantly being faded, dissipated, and ceasing to exist not just physically but they are also being erased from our consciousness (Stibbe, 2012).

The analysis of anthropomorphism and anthropocentrism in the wildlife tv documentaries and films is to make the readers aware of sensitize them towards the erasure of nature (animals, plants etc.) and their significance in the broader horizon. It is significant to reveal how language plays a great role in shaping the mindset. Due to the use of anthropomorphic language in nature discourses, nature indirectly is being erased. Foregrounding and shedding light on the prevalent issues like (anthropocentrism and erasure) can help bring the problem to limelight and provoke the readers to come up with better alternatives and solution to the problems that are otherwise considered normal and acceptable.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The following chapter starts from a general commentary on anthropomorphic discourses in the nature/wildlife documentaries and films and advances to presenting the research findings in context of the research questions. The chapter ends on suggesting the ideas for future research.

The ecolinguistic analysis of TV show MeatEater helped the researcher draw upon the notions of anthropomorphism and anthropocentrism deeply rooted in the wildlife shows/films/documentaries with the help of theory of Erasure and Stibbe's model of Ecolinguistic discourse analysis. Animals, when overly anthropomorphized as humans, lose their individuality and their right of being presented as beings that are totally different from humans. Anthropomorphic constructs that are used in the show MeatEater helped the researcher develop a nexus between the theoretical and the analytical framework i.e. the overuse of anthropomorphic language ultimately erases the animals out of their natural habitat. This disturbs the ecological balance and renders the animals as insignificant beings that are subordinate to humans. Claiming that this area has remained relatively untouched in the field of ecolinguistics, the present study has addressed this gap in the present research.

The theory of erasure (comprising three levels i.e., the void, the mask and the trace) helped the researcher explore the anthropomorphic language that erases the animals from the natural world and presents them as an exploitable entity by producing an anthropocentric effect. It also helped the researcher uncover the ecologically harmful worldviews produced by the vicious human tendencies. Moreover, the EDA model was used to identify and evaluate the traces of erasure in the selected sample. It further helped the researcher conduct a thematic analysis of the audience feedback on the show MeatEater retrieved from IMDb. In addition to this, the EDA model emphasized the importance of environmental sustainability using Fisher's (2002) idea of Ecopsychology.

This dissertation deals with three research questions. Addressing the first question, the researcher explored the anthropomorphic gendered pronouns used in the selected sample. The researcher divided the analysis of lexical choices into two

categories. First, the relationship of the adjectives with pronouns was analyzed. In the second part, the relationship of verbs with the pronouns was analyzed. The present study focused on three most frequently used pronouns, “he”, “she” and “they” used for animals to assign them the gender roles as they are used in human society. For example, for a deer that appeared to be physically strong, Steven Rinella used the pronoun, “he” to refer to it. On the other hand, the animals who appeared physically fragile, he used the pronoun, “she” to refer to it. He also goes on to use the adjectives to anthropomorphize them such as “big”, “wide” and “thick” for (he) animals and “nimble”, “delicate” and “dainty” for (she) animals. He associates human-like actions to animals by using anthropomorphic verbs for them such as “teasing”, “bullying” etc.

Addressing the second question, the researcher calculated the frequency of each gendered pronoun using AntConc. He, She and They have been used 438, 28 and 429 times respectively. Textual evidence has been identified and quoted to show how animals are massified and commercialized for the benefits of human beings. The researcher has also mentioned how Steven Rinella uses unethical language to demean and sexualize the animals.

To answer the third research question of the present study, the researcher divided the analysis in three sections. The first one deals with the instances of “void”, second with the instances of “mask” and third with the instances of “trace”. Each section includes examples of the three different levels from an ecolinguistic standpoint using the EDA model and theory of Erasure as the theoretical underpinning. Some of the instances show a complete erasure of the animals while others present them in a distorted manner or in the form of faint traces.

While conducting the thematic analysis of the feedback, the researcher discovered that shows like MeatEater create a ‘cultural code’ of human superiority and animal repression. Snapshots of audience feedback have been attached in the appendix of the dissertation as a proof of how these cultural codes strangle the bond of humans with nature.

Concluding the findings, the researcher emphasizes that discourses, when they try to represent and develop the social world, are limited in their power. Social life as a whole is an incredibly complex concept, and hence the models at their center are simplifications which exclude many variables from their building of a small aspect of

it. Many discussions about how humans interact with each other totally neglect how humans interact with animals, plants, and the environment. While some of those conversations must have a specific emphasis, it is equally true that others should not. Economic discourses that ignore the natural world's influence on human affairs are harmful, because they tend to endanger the ability of human societies to survive (as well as their economy, of course). When it comes to the natural world, erasure is common in discourse, as the natural world is discussed in a distorted fashion, taking focus away from its genuine character and setting it up for exploitation. A major ethical concern arises when animals, plants, forests, and rivers are transformed into machines, objects, biological resources, or stocks of natural capital. Then there is erasure, when traces remain rather than a powerful and vivid picture, a subtle indication. Animals still exist but they appear only in an eroded form.

The present research shows that poachers like Steven Rinella (Speaker of the show *MeatEater*) are unrelentingly attempting to erase the significance of wild animals from the minds of ordinary people, and that the 'MeatEater' contains all three types of erasure (Void, Mask, and Trace). Furthermore, according to the research findings of the present study, our language has a close relationship with the ecosystem and, when not being used correctly, has severe environmental consequences. Steven Rinella's language has frequently oppressed wildlife. Language is a handy tool for oppressing the environment.

Re-minding (task of bringing the natural world back into our consciousness) of the human language is required. We need to track down major discourses where we're endangering nature and take action to change those discourses. We can't only rely on awareness; we need to focus on change. Humans are responsible for harmful discourses, thus there ought to be individuals who care about ethics and they shall raise their voice as to how we should refrain from inflicting harm on others, including animals, forests, rivers, and human beings in the future.

Ultimately, the goal is to cause a fundamental shift in the discourse around the natural world, leading to a wide range of new ways of depicting the natural world that will encourage people to take action to protect and preserve it. Since ecolinguistics believes that human language is a part of human society, and that human society is a part of the natural world, it aims to remind linguists of these interconnections. By

doing this, a whole range of avenues of research is open, and the fundamental one is to create a kind of critical discourse study in order to support the life-sustaining systems we have in place. In sum, it's time to take the natural world into account in all of our operations because if the natural world is disregarded, it will be literally erased.

5.1 Suggestions for Future Research

Anthropomorphic approach has played a key role in the success of television and movie wildlife programs. It is also an influential area of research in "Ecolinguistics" as it is highly important to the conservation-conscious audience. The viewpoints of the audience are split in two, the ones who support anthropomorphism and the ones who abhor it. A likelihood of anthropomorphism inspiring "nature conservation efforts" and searching "better alternative for anthropomorphism" has not been firmly established, and hence I recommend further research, including public surveys, to clarify this matter. The future researcher can consider other entities like (plants and trees, rivers etc) and analyze how they are erased through the use of certain lexical choices made by the humans in other nature documentaries or films.

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APPENDIX A

This appendix consists of the images showing the public feedback on the Wildlife TV show 'MeatEater'. The comments of the general public are saved in the form of images taken from the IMDb Original website.

Figure: A1

MeatEater (2012-)
User Reviews
 + Review this title

22 Reviews
 Hide Spoilers Filter by Rating: **Show All** Sort by: **Helpfulness**

★ 9/10
A diamond in the ruff
 fredericks79 25 January 2014

In this modern age of reality TV and adhd, when it comes to media we get a constant blitzkrieg of information. Much of this comes in the form of advertisements and images furthering this age of extreme consumerism. Meat Eater is such a breath of fresh air! Breath it in folks. Steven Rinella is the wonderful driving force behind this breath of fresh air we get to breath in so deep. Yes this is a hunting show. But it isn't just a hunting show. It is a cooking show as well. It is many things, and that is what makes is so great. See the world, take in all these beautiful places you probably will never go. The greens, blues, tans, and white landscapes. The majestic animals. The hunt. The kill. The ritualistic carving and cleaning of the animals. The fire. The meats cooking and smoking. Me salivating. This show is great in so many ways. The most important reason is Steve's realness. He's not afraid to admit his hunting mistakes, he doesn't always get the animal he came for and that's OK because it's more about the journey to get there then the end result. Do yourself a favor and take this journey with him and become a true Meat Eater. You will be a better person for it.

Figure: A2

★ 10/10
Best Outdoor Show on TV
 aschneider-02387 15 September 2018

Honestly I think Steve is a fantastic host and hunter. I watch a ton of "hunting" shows and Meat Eater is by far my favorite. Not only are they entertaining, they are educational as well. No one shows the true outdoors and experiences of a hunter like Meat Eater. Most shows are about antlers which sometimes I don't mind but I really enjoy Steve's way of showing every part of an animal is a trophy.

17 out of 22 found this helpful. Was this review helpful? [Sign in to vote.](#)
[Permalink](#)

★ 10/10
Fantastic show
 footballfan142007 23 March 2018

Steve puts into words exactly how I feel about hunting. He shows the good, the bad, and the ugly of the show and shows that there are hunters that hunt for food and not for trophies. He shows the almost religious experience of hunting so well. I can't say enough amazing things about this show. I recently discovered it and I have every episode. My cousins and I are planning our first Elk hunt now because of Steve and this show.

18 out of 25 found this helpful. Was this review helpful? [Sign in to vote.](#)
[Permalink](#)

★ 10/10

Figure: A3

★ 10/10
Steven Rinella is an absolute badass
 landenblanchfield 13 October 2018
 I listen to his podcast and watch his show on Netflix all the time. Great new perspective for non hunters and hunters alike

12 out of 17 found this helpful. Was this review helpful? [Sign in to vote.](#)
[Permalink](#)

★ 10/10
Actual hunting!
 stevefelshaw-90663 5 November 2018
 He hunts, kills and eats (and show you how to cook) what he has killed. Really good show and he has a podcast that is really awesome too. He has an interesting way of talking that is really enjoyable to listen to.

9 out of 12 found this helpful. Was this review helpful? [Sign in to vote.](#)
[Permalink](#)

★ 8/10
The best true hunting show.
 connor-gaskey 7 November 2018
 Not "one of the best" but truly the best. His calm narration and respect for the animals is unparalleled. He doesn't hide with the "unpleasantries" of hunting like the cleaning of the animals. And almost always includes cooking the food as well. If you enjoy hunting or just want to know what ethical and realistic hunting is like, you will love this show.

11 out of 16 found this helpful. Was this review helpful? [Sign in to vote.](#)
[Permalink](#)

Figure: A4

★ 10/10
One of my favourite shows
 daleholan-87367 21 October 2018
 I've never hunted, but this show has inspired something inside me. It's like Departures with meat. Fantastic visuals, philosophy, cooking, nature and something very primal. I'm in love with this show.

9 out of 14 found this helpful. Was this review helpful? [Sign in to vote.](#)
[Permalink](#)

★ 8/10
Very good show
 paulmadaski 19 February 2017
 This young guy shows how to use every part of the animal, nothing wasted. He also demos how to cook some great recipes with wild game

Well done! Liked watching the areas he went hunting, this is great show for novice hunters to watch. I am an experienced hunter, I enjoyed this show.

9 out of 16 found this helpful. Was this review helpful? [Sign in to vote.](#)
[Permalink](#)

★ 10/10
Great show
 loganhill-57421 27 July 2018
 Awesome hunting show, a must see for anyone! Rinella is good at what he does and the show demonstrates that.

Figure: A5

★ 9/10
Great show in general and best hunting show
 mark_j_moore 20 October 2019
 This show very well put together from editing to production and there couldn't be a better host to bring such a positive and mindful approach to hunting. Steve Rinella and his respectful excitement for nature combined with his knowledge just delivers a great all round hunting show. Hunting techniques, preparing the animals, cooking, and even some great deep conversations during the hunts. I really enjoy the constant respect for nature throughout the series. Can't say enough, great watch!

Figure: A6

★ 10/10

Got me back hunting
williampvenne 3 February 2021

I started with the Podcast and then I realized they were talking about their show too. Only wish they were all on one platform. Totally awesome with one flaw, they don't hunt in New England.

1 out of 2 found this helpful. Was this review helpful? [Sign in](#) to vote.
[Permalink](#)

★ 8/10

Good show that could be even better
stamp-587-149747 26 September 2020

I've only ever hunted pheasant and quail, and that was decades ago. But I am a semi-serious saltwater kayak fisherman (mostly in the Monterey Bay in CA), and so I have some real-world appreciation for the themes that arise in this show. Don't get me wrong - I do like this show, but I think it has some issues.

Some of Steve's incessant talking hits on interesting points. For example, in one episode I saw recently, he talks about how he likes to imagine himself kicking back, relaxing, and soaking up the ambiance during those interludes when the animals are not cooperating. And, after the fact, he looks back fondly on those times. But when it's actually happening in real time, he gets antsy and wants to accomplish something instead of just sitting around waiting. I could really relate to that, not just wrt outdoor activities, but for life in general.

However, sometimes Steve is obviously just rambling to fill time. A decent editor should cut most of that crap out and instead let the landscape do some of the talking.

APPENDIX B

This appendix consists of individuals' answers to the question posted on Quora.com. The question was: Do hunters feel bad after killing the animal?


Figure: B1

Quora

Shane Haney, I've been a US citizen since birth.
 Answered April 6, 2019 · Upvoted by Rob Starlin, Hunter for 45 years in Northern Michigan.

Originally Answered: As a hunter, do you feel bad for the animals you hunted?
 No, I'll tell you why.


This is what a whitetail buck looks like dying from old age...



4K · 2 · 202

Figure: B2

Quora



There's no hospice, or loved ones by his side...no morphine drip to dull the pain. Nature isn't cuddly when it comes to the death of wild animals. The best death this deer could have hoped for would be quick, and relatively painless. That's where I come in to the story. An arrow/bullet through the heart or lungs, and his life ends within minutes, if not instantly.






I have made bad shots. Any person that has hunted long enough will. That's when I feel bad... really, really bad. Thankfully that doesn't happen very often. A quick, clean kill leaves me feeling grateful. I will share the meat with friends and family. I thank God for the opportunity, and food, then move on.



Photo from <http://whitetaillegends.com>

104.8K views · View 4,045 upvotes · View shares · Answer requested by Tanvir Khan

4K · 2 · 202

Figure: B3

Quora     

 **James O'Phelan**, INTJ learning more about myself everyday
Answered April 17, 2019 

Originally Answered: As a hunter, do you feel bad for the animals you hunted?
Here's a question, do you feel bad for wasting food?

People throw out food all the time.

The food you eat didn't have a happy existence, it lived in cages, tortured and miserable and in fear.

It's only reason for existence was for you to eat it, then you threw that food in the trash.

That animal's life meant nothing.

Conversely, a hunter kills that animal then has to carry it out of the woods, drive it to a processing center where the animal will be cut up and made into useable meat, then the hunter has to store that meat.


Up until that moment of death, that animal lead a happy existence, it got to eat and play and do whatever it wanted every day of its life.

And at the moment of death, the animal dies quickly.

Who appreciates their food more? You or that hunter?

How much food do you think that hunter throws away?

I would argue very little.

 4 