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## **Positive Discourse Analysis: re-thinking human ecological relationships**

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### Introduction

If discourse analysts are serious about wanting to use their work to enact social change, then they will have to broaden their coverage to include ... discourse that inspires, encourages, heartens; discourse we like, that cheers us along. (Martin 1999, pp. 51–52)

Ecolinguistics has tended to focus on negative critique, exposing the dominant discourses that our unsustainable industrial civilisation is based on and showing how they promote ecologically destructive behaviour. Examples include consumerist discourses which encourage unnecessary consumption, economic discourses which represent the main goal of society as unending economic growth, the deceptive discourses of greenwash, or agricultural discourses which treat the natural world mechanistically as a resource to be exploited. While exposing dominant negative discourses is essential, it just the first step. There is little point exposing the problems with current ways of using language unless there are beneficial alternative forms of language available to move towards. The next step is to search for new discourses to base society on; for example, discourses which promote *being more* rather than *having more*, wellbeing rather than growth, and respecting rather than conquering nature. There have, however, been far fewer studies which have examined positive discourses, that is, discourses we like, which inspire, encourage, and hearten us. This chapter will consider some of the theoretical and practical issues in conducting what Martin (1999, 2004) calls *Positive Discourse Analysis* within ecolinguistics. The question is: what role can ecolinguistics play in the search for positive new discourses to live by that work better in the conditions of the world we face than the dominant discourses of an unsustainable civilization?

### Historical perspectives

From early on, Ecolinguistics has tended to focus on the negative impacts of language in encouraging ecologically destructive behaviour. The first work which is credited with serious consideration of the role of linguistics in addressing ecological issues was Halliday's 1990 speech to AILA (reprinted in Halliday 2001). In this speech Halliday claimed that 'there is a syndrome of grammatical features which conspire...to construe reality in a certain way; and it is a way that is no longer good for our health as a species' (p.193). An example he gives is of the *Senser* participant in sentences (a being who is feeling or thinking something), which tends to be limited in grammar to humans and a few selected animals. He states that 'The

grammar makes it hard for us to accept the planet Earth as a living entity' (p.195). Halliday's focus on 'the grammar' of our native language constraining how we see the world draws heavily from Sapir and Whorf's hypothesis of linguistic relativity, that 'Human beings do not live in the objective world alone...but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society' (Sapir 1949, p. 162).

The Whorfian approach to ecolinguistics was explored further by Goatly (1996) and Chawla (2001). These authors argue that various features of grammar in English such as the separation of agents and affected participants, or the perception of time in terms of past, present and future, are barriers to the holistic worldview necessary to deal with ecological issues. The separation of agents and affected participants, for example, tells a story that the doer of an action is not affected by the action. This, for example, makes it seem as if a purchaser of ecologically damaging products (*X purchases Y*) is not affected by the pollution, climate change or biodiversity loss they are contributing to through their action. Goatly concludes that 'ordinary language, especially the transitive clause, is inadequate to the representation of the world demanded by modern scientific theory, especially ecological theory' (p. 537).

Mühlhäusler (2001, p. 31) similarly uses Sapir and Whorf's concept of SAE (Standard Average European) to claim that 'all is not well with English, or indeed SAE languages in general. Thus language for talking about environmental issues...appears to be deficient'. Mühlhäusler is concerned that 'if the majority of speakers of SAE languages cannot properly handle the difference between arithmetic and exponential growth and if slowly changing entities are grouped with non-changing ones [then] the very factors on which all life on earth depends will remain 'non-issues'' (p.41).

Along with the Whorfian approach came the idea that only a deep change in the inner layers of grammar could bring an ecological worldview into being. Without that deep shift, attempts to talk about the environment are just 'surface ecologisation' of discourse, that is, 'the process of superficial greening which we have seen taking place in genres such as advertising, political speeches and commercial articles over the last 30 years' (Fill 2001, p. 69). An example of surface ecologisation Fill that gives is of 'linguistic strategies used to make products appear greener – products, in most cases, which are not particularly environmentally friendly in themselves' (p.70). This led to a somewhat suspicious approach to language about the environment, with a focus on greenwash, the empty environmental spin of corporations and politicians, and the inadequacies of the language of environmentalism (e.g. Harré *et al.* 1999, Alexander 2009). The suspicion of environmental language is summed up in the title of Harré *et al.*'s (1999) book, *Greenspeak*, which echoes the sinister Orwellian idea of 'Newspeak'.

This approach is negative because it describes how the grammar of English is preventing us from viewing the world ecologically and treating it with care, as well as being limited in its ability to lead to action. It is not possible to change the inner levels of the

grammar of a language through an act of will. For example, it would be impossible, to change English so that it no longer separates out the subjects and objects of sentences. Halliday (2001) concedes that 'I do not think...language professionals...can plan the inner layers of grammar; there is an inherent antipathy between grammar and design' (p. 196).

Whorfian analysis does have a positive side, however, in that it praises the grammar of other (non SAE) languages for expressing a more ecological worldview. Mühlhäusler (2001), for instance, turns to the language *Aiwo* in search of more useful semantic distinctions, and gives the example of the nominal classifier *nu* which 'signals nouns which are dependent on something else for their existence'. If humans, other animals, plants and the physical environment were all classified as 'nu', then this would tell the story that all life is interdependent, and perhaps encourage protection of the larger systems that support life. However, because the distinctions are part of the deep grammatical system of *Aiwo*, they cannot be simply transferred to English – we could not start talking about a 'nu-environment', populated by 'nu-people' and 'nu-animals' who are all interdependent. Mühlhäusler concludes that 'I do not wish to claim that such distinctions should be introduced into English ... by acts of planning' (p.37). While the Whorfian approach does have a positive angle, it is hard to put into practice in building a more sustainable society if analysis remains at the level of the built-in and hard to change grammar of the language.

Another positive angle that ecolinguistics has taken is to search for 'correct' lexical items. For instance, Kemmerer (2006) notes that the word 'animal' in expressions like 'the way people treat animals' is misleading because it tells a story that humans are not animals. From an ecological perspective the exclusion of humans from the noun 'animal' is undesirable because it draws attention away from the fact that, like all other animals, humans depend on a physical environment for our survival. Kemmerer therefore proposes the new term 'anymal' which refers to 'all animals, unique and diverse, marvellous and complex, who do not happen to be *homo sapiens*.' The word *anymal*, Kemmerer (2006:11) claims, is both 'biologically and socially correct'.

Schultz (2001, p. 111) also takes a correctness approach, arguing that instead of the expression 'clearing' applied to forests, 'we should use a more accurate expression such as "native vegetation removal"'. Likewise, it is 'incorrect to use the word ['harvest'] in relation to old growth (primary) forest' because it conveys 'the idea that logging is the taking of the annual production of a 'crop', even when the crop is hundreds of years old'. The most comprehensive attempt to change the lexicon on the basis of correctness is that of Dunayer (2001), who provides a glossary of terms with preferred alternatives, for example 'free-living nonhumans' should be used instead of 'wildlife' to emphasize the individuality of the animals, and the more accurate terms 'food industry captive' and 'cow enslaver' should be used instead of 'farm animal' and 'dairy farmer' respectively (p. 193-198).

However, an otherwise positive review of Dunayer's work by Blackwell (2002, p. 589) stated that 'Dunayer's ... language at times so closely resembles that of a parody that I often

found it hard to take her seriously'. The correctness approach at least presents a positive alternative to problematic forms of language, but is sometimes seen as arrogant in its insistence that people who use ordinary words like *animal* or *farm* are incorrect, and its prescriptivism in providing correct alternatives like *anymal* or *enslavement facility*. Expressions such as the 'politically correct brain police' are a common, if unfair, way of dismissing attempts such as these (West 2015).

Fortunately, it is not necessary to invent artificial new expressions to create positive ways of speaking and writing about the world that inspire people to protect the ecosystems that support life. Neither is it necessary to impose new forms of grammar on the English language. There have been speakers and writers who have managed to take up the English language, with all its imperfections, and put ordinary words together using standard grammar to inspire and make a real difference in the world. Rachel Carson, for instance, is credited with playing a foundational role in the start of the environmental movement through her vivid and lyrical descriptions of the effects of agricultural chemicals on ecosystems (2000). Carson and other similar lyrical science writers such as Aldo Leopold and Loren Eiseley form part of a school of writers that Macfarlane (2013, p. 167) calls *imaginative naturalism*. The language of imaginative naturalism can be considered a *positive discourse*, in that it contains clusters linguistic features which come together to portray the world in ways which encourage respect and care for nature. These clusters of features draw from the standard grammar and lexicon, but arrange the words and grammatical features in ways that tell a different story about the world.

One of the first attempts to conduct detailed ecolinguistic investigation of positive discourses is Goatly's (2000) study, which compared the linguistic features of William Wordsworth's *The Prelude* with an edition of *The Times* newspaper. Goatly's focus was on how prominently elements of nature appear in the two sources, and the degree of power the linguistic features of the discourses attribute to nature. He found that the grammar used by Wordsworth gave much more agency to nature than that found in *The Times*. For example, Wordsworth represents nature as the Actor participant of clauses (*The eagle soars; the rain beat hard*), the Sayer participant (*a river murmuring; wild brooks prattling*) or the Experience participant (*see that pair, the lamb and the lamb's mother*). In this way, Wordsworth is representing nature as an active force to be respected, or as something to be carefully observed with the senses. Goatly states that (2000, p. 301):

the view of the natural world represented by Wordsworth, along with aspects of his grammar, provides a much better model for our survival than that represented by the *Times*...to survive we had better take note of Wordsworth...rethink and respeak our participation in nature before it rethinks or rejects our participation in it.

At around the same time that Goatly was conducting his analysis of Wordsworth, James Martin was developing the concept of *Positive Discourse Analysis* (PDA). In 1999, Martin analysed Nelson Mandela's autobiography, which he considered 'Inspirational – with no

tinge of bitterness or betrayal; rather a message of hope and wisdom – grace personified’ (Martin 1999, p. 29). He described his approach to analysing the text as exemplifying ‘a positive style of discourse analysis that focuses on hope and change, by way of complementing the deconstructive exposé associated with critical discourse analysis’ (p.29). The important word in this description is ‘complementing’; PDA was never intended as a replacement for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), but rather as encouragement to extend the focus of CDA beyond texts which are implicated in oppression, exploitation and the abusive power relationships. As Martin later wrote, ‘we need to move beyond a singular focus on semiosis in the service of abusive power – and reconsider power communally as well, as it circulates through communities, as they re-align around values, and renovate discourses that enact a better world’ (Martin 2004, p. 197).

The framework of PDA was further developed by Macgilchrist (2007) who explored voices in news media that offer radically different perspectives on the world from standard news frames. His focus was on representations of the Russian-Chechen conflict, and how occasional voices in the news challenge the one-sided mainstream frame which represents Russia as a villain and Chechens as victims:

Occasionally, however, news articles are published which manage to contest the main, central, predominant frames for reporting the news. Here PDA sees a positive development that could yield fruitful insights for those wishing to counter what they see as questionable dominant messages (p. 74).

In this way, PDA provides a way of searching for positive uses of language that can provide alternatives to what the analyst perceives as negative or damaging dominant discourses. Bartlett (2012) developed the framework of Positive Discourse Analysis further in his detailed study of how Amerindian communities of Guyana reclaim their heritage through resisting the mainstream development discourses which construct them as backward communities.

Although Goatly did not use the expression *Positive Discourse Analysis* (PDA) for his analysis of Wordsworth, it bears the hallmarks of PDA in that it deliberately chose the text as a likely source for positive representations of nature and focused on the features of the text which the analyst felt were helpful in dealing with the ecological crisis. Later on, in 2003, Richard Alexander wrote what can be considered a Positive Discourse Analysis of a lecture by the notable scientist and environmental campaigner Vandana Shiva (Alexander 2003). Alexander’s account is clearly framed in a positive way, speaking of Shiva’s ‘achievement’ in delivering ‘a sustained, committed and very eloquent analysis of what the impact of globalisation means for the poor peasants and especially the women of India’ (p. 8). He analyses the language Shiva uses in detail, showing how she resists dominant discourses of globalisation and neoliberalism and presents a worldview that values sharing, saving seeds, sustainability, the poor, peasants, the contribution of women, small farms, the local, and the natural. Alexander described how Shiva’s language is particularly effective

because she deconstructs the language of Monsanto and global corporations and provides an alternative, an example being:

A global monoculture is being forced on people by defining everything that is fresh, local and handmade as a health hazard. (Shiva in Alexander 2003, p.10)

In this quote, Shiva is representing *local* and *handmade* as positive by combining them with the unmarked (positive) term *fresh* using an additive conjunction, in contrast to the negative way that global corporations portray them.

Goatly and Alexander are only analysing one particular text – a poem by William Wordsworth and a speech by Vandana Shiva respectively. However, these two texts do not stand in isolation and are part of larger discourses, of romantic poetry in the first case and anti-globalisation activist discourse in the second. While the specific nuances and contexts of individual texts are important, PDA can also investigate patterns of language use which run across multiple texts written by a particular group of writers/poets. An example of this kind of analysis is the analysis of Japanese haiku in Stibbe (2012). The analysis searches for widespread patterns of linguistic features that run across the haiku of multiple authors. The study is an example of Positive Discourse Analysis since it is orientated towards finding patterns of language use that present alternatives to dominant ways of representing animals in mainstream discourses (e.g., as machines, objects, resources, possessions or passive victims). Among the positive features found in the discourse of haiku are the following:

In general, clause structure in haiku represents animals and plants as beings who are actively involved in leading their own lives in ways consistent with their nature, whether that is flying, slithering, or blooming. They represent animals in particular as beings with mental lives, who know, feel, and have desires. Both animals and plants are offered the recognition of being living beings directly addressable by humans, and in the rare cases where plants/animals are represented as the objects of human interference, there is a degree of sympathy implied. (Stibbe 2012, p. 153)

The purpose of analysing positive discourses such as those of romantic poetry, anti-globalisation activism or haiku is to discover ways of using language that can potentially encourage people to care about and protect the ecosystems that life depends on. There are, however, many other topics and discourses beyond nature writing for ecolinguistic PDA to explore, as the next section describes.

### Critical issues and topics

Positive Discourse Analysis could be described as ‘the search for new stories to live by’, since, as Ben Okri (1996, p. 21) puts it, ‘Stories are the secret reservoir of values: change the

stories that individuals or nations live by and you change the individuals and nations themselves'. There is growing recognition that the underlying stories of the current industrial civilisation are leading towards a future of increasing injustice and ecological destruction. Robertson (2014, p. 54) warns of the dangers of the story of economic growth as the primary goal of society, stating that 'Growth as the core economic paradigm has been developing for several hundred years and has become solidly entrenched since the last century'. Mary Midgley (2011) describes how the 'myths we live by' are leading to ecological destruction, including the myths of progress, individuality, omnipotent science, commercial freedom, life as a competition and nature is a machine. The most dangerous story of all is, according to Paul Kingsnorth and Dougald Hine (2009), 'the story of human centrality, of a species destined to be lord of all it surveys, unconfined by the limits that apply to other, lesser creatures'.

Positive Discourse Analysis is a search for new ways of using language that tell very different stories from those of the current industrial civilisation – stories that can encourage us to protect the ecosystems that life depends on and build more socially just societies. New stories are needed to provide alternatives to current stories of consumerism, technological progress, economic growth, the mastery of nature and other dominant ways of conceiving the world that contribute to ecological destruction.

A place to start the search for positive economic discourses is with the discourse of New Economics. This discourse manifests itself in reports from the New Economics Foundation such as *People Powered Money* (NEF 2015a), in Kalle Lasn's book *Meme wars: the creative destruction of neoclassical economics* (Lasn 2012), Tim Jackson's *Prosperity without Growth* (Jackson 2011), and Bhutan's *Gross National Happiness* project (Muller and Wangchuk 2008). New Economics uses language creatively to attach negative associations to economic growth. The New Economics Foundation uses the term 'uneconomic growth' (originally coined by Herman Daly) to express how 'beyond a certain limit growth becomes uneconomic; in other words, its costs outweigh its benefits' (NEF 2015b, p. 6). It also collocates 'growth' with terms that have negative associations such as 'threatened' and 'doctrine' in the following examples:

This desired state of commercial diversity is threatened by the mainstream growth model of the retail sector (p. 49)

move away from the doctrine of endless economic growth and incentivise more sustainable behaviour (p.63)

These examples do not just represent growth negatively, they also provide positive terms as alternatives: *sustainable* is positive since it is the unmarked term of pair sustainable/unsustainable, and *diversity* is positive because it is collocated with 'desired'. In this way, the discourse of New Economics sets up alternative goals for monetary policy such as happiness, wellbeing, sustainability and diversity, which go beyond simple 'growth'. Another



example is the following, where societal 'success' is redefined in terms of 'sustainable wellbeing' and expressed with high modality (certainty):

a successful society is one where economic activity delivers high levels of sustainable wellbeing for its citizens. (p.63)

The goal of Positive Discourse Analysis in analysing texts such as those of New Economics is not to promote the specific texts, but instead to assemble clusters of linguistic features that can be useful in conveying new and beneficial stories. Terms such as 'uneconomic growth' or patterns of presupposition, redefinition and metaphor can potentially be carried over to other mainstream discourses. News reporting, for instance, often unconsciously perpetuates the story of economic growth as being the goal of society by reporting any increase in growth as 'good news'. It would be possible, however, for broadcasters to work with ecolinguists to expose the underlying stories behind the news, and convey more ecologically beneficial underlying messages through using new terminology and grammatical features.

Another key topic for Positive Discourse Analysis concerns the discursive construction of the natural world. There is a need for alternatives to dominant discourses which represent nature mechanistically as inert matter that exists solely to be exploited by humans. Bringhurst (2008, p. 26) turns to Native American discourses in a search for beneficial representations of the natural world, writing:

If we do want to learn how to live in the world, I think the study of Native American literature is one of the best and most efficient ways to do just that...the fundamental subject of this thought, this intellectual tradition, is the relationship between human beings and the rest of the world.

In addition to the kind of Native American literature that Bringhurst analyses, there are a large number of what can be called 'Native American Sayings' that are frequently quoted in environmental or ecological works. The origin of these sayings is sometimes the written English of Native American chiefs such as Luther Standing Bear who were raised in the oral traditions of their culture and educated in English. Sometimes the origins are more indirect, however. For example, Chief Seattle's famous speech came from the recollection of the words of an interpreter which were heard a significant time before it was written down (Furtwangler 1997). The English sayings cannot therefore be considered a direct representation of indigenous beliefs. However, what could be called the 'Discourse of Native American Sayings' does provide a range of metaphors, pronoun use, vocabulary uses and other linguistic features that could potentially be useful in providing alternatives to mechanistic ways of talking about nature (Stibbe forthcoming).

The discourse of Native American Sayings sets up an *ideological square* (Van Dijk 2006, p. 374) that represents dominant western ideologies of nature negatively as the opinion of

an outgroup ('them') and indigenous worldviews more positivity as the ideas the ingroup ('us'). The following is an example:

We did not think of the great open plains, the beautiful rolling hills, and winding streams with tangled growth, as "wild." Only to the white man was nature a "wilderness" and only to him was the land "infested" with "wild" animals and "savage" people. To us it was tame. Earth was bountiful and we were surrounded with the blessings of the Great Mystery. Not until the hairy man from the east came and with brutal frenzy heaped injustices upon us and the families we loved was it "wild" for us. When the very animals of the forest began fleeing from his approach, then it was that for us the "Wild West" began. Luther Standing Bear (Sayre 2014, p. 82)

On one side are the pronouns 'we', and 'us', which are associated with the positive adjectives 'beautiful', 'tame', and 'bountiful', while on the other side the pronoun is 'him' (the white/hairy man), which is associated with the adjectives 'wild', 'savage', and 'brutal'. The word 'wild' is not intrinsically negative, but is given negativity through being collocated with other terms that are intrinsically negative such as 'savage' and 'infested'. In this way, the worldview of 'the white man', and by implication current industrial civilisation, is given negativity in contrast to the positivity of indigenous worldviews.

Abram (1996, p. 68) describes how indigenous oral cultures pass on local environmental knowledge through the generations, the kind of knowledge which allows people to meet their needs without destroying the ecosystems they are part of:

The linguistic patterns of an oral culture remain uniquely responsive, and responsible, to the more-than-human life-world, or bioregion, in which that culture is embedded.

This is in contrast with the estrangement from nature in industrial societies, which makes us 'so oblivious to the presence of other animals and the earth, that our current lifestyles and activities contribute daily to the destruction of whole ecosystems' (p. 137). Indigenous oral cultures from around the world are therefore a useful potential source of beneficial discourses that Positive Discourse Analysis can analyse. In the past, indigenous understandings tended to be analysed within anthropology as false or misguided beliefs (Harvey 2005, p. 3), but more recent work in anthropology takes indigenous understandings seriously. For example, Harvey describes how animistic beliefs found in indigenous cultures around the world consist of:

theories, discourses, and practices of relationship, of living well, of realising more fully what it means to be a person, and a human person, in the company of other persons, not all of whom are human but all of whom are worthy of respect (p. xvii).

For an ecolinguist, what matters is not the truth or falsity of indigenous worldviews, but the distinctive linguistic patterns that they use to, for example, ascribe personhood to animals, plants, forests, and rivers, and thereby encourage respectful and mutual

relationships with them. Only some of the patterns of language used in indigenous discourses will be translatable into equivalents in the languages of industrial civilisations, but those which are have the potential to provide new and positive stories to live by.

In addition to oral texts which are carried down through the generations, there are also literary texts which can be potentially useful sources of beneficial discourses. There are numerous schools of writers and poets which use language in characteristic ways to express the intrinsic value the natural world. To give just a few examples, there is the Romantic poetry of William Wordsworth or John Clare, the imaginative naturalist writings of Rachel Carson or Aldo Leopold, the 'new nature writing' of Richard Mabey or Kathleen Jamie, the contemporary ecopoetry of Helen Moore or Susan Richardson, and traditional literary schools such as the Shan-Shui writers of China or classical haiku poets in Japan. Robert Macfarlane (2013), in his article *New Words on the Wild*, expresses some scepticism about the ability of literature to 'save the earth'. However, he concludes more positively, stating that:

For literature possesses certain special abilities, very different to those of science. It can convey us into the minds of other people, and even — speculatively — the minds of other species. It can help us to imagine alternative futures and counter-factual pasts. It is content with partial knowledge in ways that science is not. Crucially it can, in author and environmentalist Bill McKibben's phrase, make us feel things "in the gut" — fear, loss and damage, certainly, but also hope, beauty and wonder. And these last are, I think, the most important emotions in terms of our environmental future: our behaviour is more likely to be changed by promise than by menace. We will not save what we do not love. (p.167)

One of the reasons that Macfarlane is sceptical of the ability of nature writing to save the Earth is that it is only likely to be read by the converted, i.e., those who already care about the natural world. Indeed, while nature writing does contain patterns of language that can inspire respect for the natural world, if it is going to make a difference then these patterns of language will have to spread far beyond nature writing and become infused in mainstream texts, from news journalism and environmental reports to biology textbooks. The promise of ecolinguistics is that it can identify the linguistic patterns from positive discourses that inspire respect and care for the natural world, and make them available to those in the mainstream who want to adjust their language to better address ecological issues.

While there are many other places to search for positive discourses, it is worth mentioning alternative movements within industrial countries such as permaculture, biodynamic agriculture, slow food, transition towns, pagan groups, and campaigning groups such as Earth First. The Slow Food movement, for instance, has a distinct discourse that emphasises the connection between food and ecological preservation. In its own alliterative terms, it offers 'a comprehensive approach to food that recognizes the strong connections

between plate, planet, people, politics and culture' (SF 2015). The linkage between 'plate' and 'planet' is made through terms which contain both aspects such as 'eco-gastronomy' (p.5), 'food biodiversity' (p.10) or expressions such as 'we can change the world one meal at a time'.

The Slow Food movement rearranges the mainstream frame which sees producers as active and consumers as passive. Instead, the discourses reframes consumers as 'co-producers' in expressions like 'Eating is an agricultural act. Informed, selective consumers become co-producers by demanding food that is good, clean and fair' (p.6). The speech act 'demanding' places the consumers in a powerful position of being able to influence production. The language used by the movement is inclusive, with the pronoun 'we' being used to include the reader within the movement, e.g., 'We can feed the world, and we can feed it better, by working with nature', and the terms 'community', 'together', 'each of us', 'everyone'. In this way the discourse actively involves the reader in a community that takes on a new relationship with food and the earth.

This section has only mentioned a few topics and a few possible places to search for positive discourses that can provide new ways of thinking and talking about those topics, but there are very many more. Whatever the topic, however, ecolinguistic Positive Discourse Analysis needs a clear methodology to be a valid exercise, and this is discussed in the next section.

## Research methods

Positive Discourse Analysis is based on a similar methodology to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), involving detailed examination of texts to reveal hidden ideologies that are subtly conveyed by the use of particular linguistic features. Martin (2004) illustrates this with the topic of the oppression of the indigenous population of Australia. He firstly uses Critical Discourse Analysis to reveal the negative ideologies contained in a statement by the then prime minister, John Howard, on the issue of forced separation of aboriginal children from their parents. Martin shows how Howard uses grammatical features to disguise the agent of the oppression, e.g., referring to the removal of children as 'actions that were sanctioned by the laws of the time, and that were believed to be in the best interests of the children concerned.' This deletes the government as the agent through the nominalisation of 'the actions' (rather than 'the government acted'), and the passive 'were believed to' (rather than 'the government believed that'). In this way, Howard subtly conveys an ideology that the government was not guilty of crimes against the aboriginal people.

However, Martin argues that negative criticism like this is not enough, that 'deconstructive and constructive activity are both required' (p. 183). He therefore analyses a government report *Bringing Them Home*, which is written in a very different, and more

positive, style. The report privileges aboriginal voices by placing them in first position in chapters and includes first person testimony of those who were oppressed. This encodes the opposite ideology to Howard, that is, that the government was guilty of terrible crimes. For Martin this is a positive discourse, and he credits it for a swing in public opinion towards reconciliation.

Positive Discourse Analysis as a methodology, however, has been criticised. Wodak and Chilton (2005) write that: 'adopting a "positive" stance towards public discourse may slip over into complicity in injustice or oppression' (p. xvi). Similarly, Flowerdew (2008, p. 204) writes that 'One danger of [PDA], however, would be that of the enterprise turning into a form of propaganda on behalf of the status quo'. It is essential, therefore that Positive Discourse Analysis remains critical, i.e., it praises discourses as positive only after systematic analysis using a framework that involves clear criteria for what 'positive' actually means in practice.

In studies of racism, analysts rarely mention the values framework they are using to judge discourses against, since it is treated as self-evident that racism is negative and needs to be eliminated. In ecolinguistics, however, the situation is more complex, since it is not just a situation of one human group oppressing another group, but multiple human groups interacting with each other in ways that are undermining the biological and environmental systems that support life. There are therefore a range of possible goals that an analyst could be pursuing. For example, is the goal to help sustain industrial civilisation by making it more efficient, or to help replace industrial civilisation by new ecological ways of life? Is the goal to reduce consumption by the rich while the poor increase their consumption, or for everyone to reduce consumption? Is the goal human wellbeing or the wellbeing of all species? Is the goal a reduction in population or more efficient technology to meet the needs of the growing population? Is the goal economic contraction, or economic growth which has been de-coupled from ecological damage?

The key question, then, for ecolinguistics is 'what makes a discourse positive'? The answer to that question will, inevitably, depend on the ecological philosophy (ecosophy) of the analyst. Ecosophy is term introduced by Arne Naess (Naess 1995, p. 8) to mean 'a philosophy of ecological harmony...openly normative it contains norms, rules, postulates, value priority announcements and hypotheses concerning the state of affairs'. Value priority announcements are not evidence-based but are the values that the analyst holds, such as whether non-human life holds any value in its own sake or whether animals and plants only matter if they are useful for humans. Other aspects of ecosophies do depend on evidence, however, for example evidence of the extent to which industrial civilisation would need to change to bring carbon dioxide levels down to a level which can mitigate climate change. Once analysts have determined their own ecosophies, they can use them to provide criteria for judging whether discourses are positive or not.

There are various philosophical frameworks that can be drawn on for an ecosophy, including 'cornucopianism' (e.g. Lomborg 2001), 'sustainable development' (e.g. Baker 2006), social ecology (e.g. Bookchin 1994, 2005), ecofeminism (e.g. Adams and Gruen 2014), Deep Ecology (e.g. Drenson and Inoue 1995) and Deep Green Resistance (McBay *et al.* 2011). These range from positions which see continuing technological progress as the solution to environmental problems (cornucopianism), to radical positions which demand an end to industrial civilisation (Deep Green Resistance). Once the analyst has determined what their ecosophy is, the methodology firstly involves close analysis of discourses to reveal the hidden ideologies within them. Then these ideologies are compared to the ecosophy. If the ideologies align with, promote or resonate with the ecosophy then the discourses are considered positive.

As an example, a Deep Ecology ecosophy would see animals and plants as having intrinsic value, and recognising this intrinsic value as an important step to protecting the natural world and building a more sustainable society. A PDA analysis could analyse the discourse of animal ethics organisations such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and the Humane Society, using a Deep Ecology ecosophy to judge the discourse analyst. For example, the PETA website states:

'Orcas are intelligent animals who work cooperatively, have sophisticated social structures, communicate using distinct dialects and swim up to 100 miles every day' (Dan 2015)

This uses the relative pronoun 'who', which is typically used for people, to describe Orcas, instead of the objectifying pronoun 'which'. It also places Orcas as the agent of the material processes of *work*, and *swim*, representing them as actively engaged in the world around them. It also places orcas as the Sayer in the verbal process of 'communicate', with the noun 'dialect' representing their communication as similar to language. By emphasising intelligence, wilful action, communicative ability, and by using the pronoun 'who', the discourse increases the personhood of the Orcas. According to a Deep Ecology ecosophy this could therefore be considered a positive discourse since it ascribes intrinsic value to species beyond the human.

Aside from the focus on the positive, there is a difference in the kind of texts that Critical Discourse analysis and Positive Discourse Analysis focus on. Critical Discourse Analysis is interested in resisting the dominant mainstream discourses which structure an unjust and unsustainable society. The focus is therefore not so much on individual texts but on typical patterns of language which are present across large numbers of texts, since these larger patterns form the dominant discourses of society. A CDA analysis might, for example, focus on the discourse of neoclassical economics, examining pervasive patterns of linguistic features across numerous texts which contribute to ecologically destructive behaviour. On the other hand, a PDA analysis will be searching for positive discourses outside of the mainstream which are not pervasive yet, but which could offer something valuable if they

were promoted to become more pervasive. PDA can therefore focus on more detailed analysis of smaller numbers of texts to reveal positive features, without the need to establish how widespread these features are at present.

Overall, a methodology for ecolinguistic PDA consists of analysing the linguistic features of a text (or a collection of texts if looking for larger patterns), to reveal the ideologies embedded in the text. These ideologies are then compared to the analyst's personal ecosophy, and the discourse is judged positive if the stories are consistent with the principles of the ecosophy. The next step is promoting the discourse, for example promoting clusters of linguistic features used in the discourse of animal ethics organisations as useful ways of conveying positive new stories about relations between humans and nature.

## Conclusion

There is now a significant body of research which analyses the negative discourses that underpin the current unjust and unsustainable industrial civilisation. There are critiques of the discourses of consumerism, neoclassical economics, advertising, intensive agriculture, and shallow environmentalism. These discourses have been accused of promoting excessive consumption and treating the natural world as a stock of resources for exploitation rather than an interconnected system that all life depends on for survival. The body of research has not, however, been matched by a body of research looking at positive discourses, discourses which can inspire people to find wellbeing in ways that do not require over-consumption, and treat the natural world with respect and care. While pointing out the unintended ecological destruction caused by negative discourses is essential, it is equally essential to be able to recommend new forms of language to move on from these discourses. This must be more than just pointing out politically correct alternatives for lexical items such as 'enslavement unit' for farm, and more than pointing out that other languages have positive linguistic features embedded deep in their grammar.

Positive Discourse Analysis analyses discourses such as nature writing, indigenous stories, new economics and humane organisations to discover clusters of linguistic features that come together to convey positive stories about the place of humans in the natural world. The ultimate aim is to promote these clusters of features so that they can become widespread alternatives to the dominant discourses of industrial civilisation.

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