



## RESEARCH PAPER

# Global Voices, Local Concerns: An Eco Critical Discourse Analysis of Environment Protection Slogans on Climate Day

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## ABSTRACT

The present study is based on the analysis of globally disseminated slogans related to climate change. The climate day is celebrated on 5th June every year. For this purpose, climate friendly slogans are coined and issued the world over and are adapted locally. The present study analyses the data by employing integrated multimodal research approach. This approach has been devised by drawing upon Kress and Hodge (2006) model of Semiological discourse analysis and Stibbe (2015) model of ecological discourse analysis. The study finds that there are five dominant representational trends namely, urgency, shared responsibility, future-oriented appeals, moral framing, and emotional global unity embodied in the data used in the study. The study also finds that although most of the slogans are propagating universal ecological values, they are also encoding localized issues, cultural metaphors, and region-specific ideologies of responsibility. Besides, it finds that climate slogans are hybrid discourses carrying global and local ecological messages.

**KEYWORDS** Climate Slogans, Multimodal Discourse Analysis, Eco Linguistics, Environmental Responsibility, Global Communication, CDA

## Introduction

The ecological consciousness constructed through language has become of increased interest in the face of environmental crises all over the world. Nadeem, et al., (2023). Among the various types of environmental communication, climate slogans, short, catchy phrases on placards, digital campaigns, posters, and environmental celebrations are very vital in shaping the attitudes of the people. The calls to action, moral responsibility, and collective awareness propagated through these slogans are beyond cultural limits.

Meanwhile, communication about the environment is not a monothetic one. Although the slogans spread all over the world, the meaning, imagery, and the structure of the stories are likely to be local in nature, symbolic of the culture, and dependent on the ecological experience of the particular place. The integration of global and local concern through the slogans related to climate makes it a fertile domain of critical discourse analysis.

The present study attempts to examine how environmental responsibility is created by climate slogans in the world using linguistic, pragmatic, multimodal, and Eco linguistic resources. Through an integrated analytical frame work the study attempts to identify the representational issues and ideological framing having global climate messages.

## **Literature Review**

### **Environmental Discourse and Eco linguistics**

Eco linguistics focuses on the connection between language and the ecological propagation (Stibbe, 2015). Environmental communication tends to be an ideological act that constructs the way societies think about the concepts of responsibility, nature, and sustainability. The use of language, metaphors, narratives and evaluative expressions are central in normalizing ecological values. Multimodal techniques such as visuals, typography, color symbolism and layout are often used in climate messaging to disseminate ecological ideology (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). The emotional and persuasive tone of the slogans is enhanced with the help of such semiotic resources that make them memorable and effective.

### **Environmental Responsibility and cultural Representations**

de Silva (2020), Alexander (2018), and Olausson (2011) argue that that cross-cultural communication on the environment is different because of historical, economic, and ecological factors. Ecological concerns vary across cultures. Every country seeking guide line from global trends related to ecology tries to adapt it keeping in view the local trends. One thing is important to note that ecological concerns have become global issue because almost ever where Natural order has been disturbed either because of industrialization or because of profit seeking nature of human beings. It is pertinent to mention here that ecological issues are dealt differently in different contexts. There are those cultures that use stewardship, those that use fear appeals and those cultures that apply moral or spiritual framing to make human beings sensitized about striking balance between human beings and nature.

### **Environmental Ideology and Critical Discourse Analysis.**

According to Fairclough (2003), discourses construct and propagate social realities about certain socio-political issues. They are considered subtle means of highlighting social issues and to win general consent about the existing issues in a particular society. Within an environmental setting, CDA can be used to demonstrate how climate slogans support ideologies of responsibility, urgency, guilt, hope, or collective action. Environment related slogans are ideologically loaded, culturally oriented and are decoded differently in different contexts. Similarly, the present study critically decodes the selected environment related slogan published on Environment Day by using integrated research design.

### **Material and Methods**

The present study employs integrated research approach which has been devised by drawing upon Stibbe (2015), Fairclough (2003) and Kress (2010) research models. This integration has been done because the data used in the present study comprises more than one mode. By combining the research models related to the analysis of visual and verbal modes the data has been analyzed focusing different modes of persuasion in the form of linguistic and semiotic resources. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) technique by Fairclough has been used to lay bare implicit and explicit ideology embedded in the selected data about environment friendly slogans focusing on different modalities of language. Whereas, in order to analyze visual techniques used in the slogans Kress' (2010) model has been operationalized. The proposed research model works at the following levels:

What meanings are being made in the text?  
 How meanings are being made in the text?  
 What resources are being drawn upon?  
 In which context are meanings being made?  
 Whose interest is being served?

## Results and Discussion

Fairclough argues that no use of language is ideology free. It is always loaded with meanings. Different linguistic moves are used to make slogans pithy and catchy. Similarly, the slogan which is mentioned below.

### *"The earth is speaking"*

Here the linguistic device of personification has been used. It is a technique, where inanimate things are assigned human attributes. Usually, earth is taken as inanimate thing incapable of speaking or listening. The use of verb speech with earth implies that so far human attitude towards earth has been devastating. They have been thinking that mother earth is insensitive to devastating human behavior. The damage done by human beings to earth has crossed all the limits. Therefore, the earth has started giving response to its inhabitants as is highlighted by the verb 'speech'. It also implies that the earth has finally realized that humans will continue harming it until it speaks to them or warns them to stop spoiling earth and its resources. The earth is and has been providing various bounties to human beings either in the form of rivers, forests, trees, mines, minerals, greenery and so many other blessings. But, on the other hand human beings have been behaving so rudely towards mother earth instead of protecting earth and natural resources. They have always been seeking their own interest either in the form of establishing industries, cutting the forests, polluting the atmosphere and wasting different resources of nature that are beneficial for the survival of human beings. Therefore, it can be inferred that now the earth has started speaking to human beings and they must listen to earth's message. The use of second person pronoun 'you' is ideological. It has been used inclusively and exclusively. It is a warning for a particular individual and for all human beings to stop wasting resources of nature.

Another slogan related to environment protection is as under:

### *"Protect what you love"*

Fairclough (2003) opines that language denotes and connotes simultaneously. It is layered and one needs linguistic and metalinguistic knowledge to explore possible layers of meanings embedded in language. Similarly, it is pertinent to mention here that it has been a strong urge among human beings to love their near and dear ones. To love self and those who are very dear to us is a prominent feature of every human. Similarly, every one claims to love his/her children. They are taken as the future of human beings. The way, so far, we, the human beings have been damaging resources of nature by no means implies that we are in love with ourselves and our children. The implied message propagated through the concise and precise use of the language of the slogan under analysis is that we should make this planet (earth) worth living for our future generations. It is also mentioned in another slogan that there is no other planet available so far, where life is possible besides earth. Therefore, at any cost we should protect our earth and all its resources for our own survival.

Fairclough argues that language mirrors sociopolitical realities of particular age and context. Especially in our context in Pakistan, mostly, it claimed that there is the lack of social justice in the country. The slogan mentioned below mirrors the same tendency prevalent in Pakistan:

### **Environmental justice = Social justice**

It is obvious from the slogan that it has been very tactfully coined. It embodies the concept of brevity is the soul of wit. The slogan is very short concise, precise, witty, pity and catchy and mathematical jargon has been used here. The few words embody a history in them. So, this is how the concept of economy of language has been observed. The use of typographic technique in the form of mathematical expression and the use of capital letters is ideological. It imparts the meaning if you do not do justice to nature, same will be done to you. Different surveys highlight the natural resources are at highest risk in Pakistan. Air pollution is crossing all the limits. Deforestation is at its worst. In such case how can the people expect of having social justice in the country. In a persuasive style the people have been urged to have good relation with nature to enjoy good social reforms. So, this typographic technique is used when someone wants to propagate or highlight something. So, this is how Fairclough's claim seems justified. That language mirror sociopolitical tendencies of a particular context. The use of binary opposition is a linguistic technique that is used to make an ideology more persuasive and more dominant.

### **Small Steps, Big Change**

The concept of smallness and bigness has been juxtaposed together in the slogan mentioned above. It connotes that taking small steps in making the environment clean never goes waste. Slowly and gradually, it proves significant. These small steps may include not throwing the garbage in the street, cutting the trees, planting more and more trees and keeping environment clean and healthy. At surface levels these steps seem insignificant but they are not. By stopping the wastage of water and each and every small step one can take to improve the environment around him or her may result in big change. The linguistic features used in the slogan include juxtaposition, typographic technique and the art of conveying message indirectly.

### ***Heal the earth, Heal yourself***

The linguistic technique of personification has been used in the slogan mentioned above. Once again, the earth has assigned human attribute. Wounding and healing process is mostly observed among human beings. The use of verb 'heal' implies that humans have been wounding the earth for their vested interests. These interests may include cutting trees for housing societies, polluting the air for industrialization and wasting natural resources. This is how humans have been wounding the earth. The concept of 'tit for tat' is common in nature. It is believed that if you do good to nature, the same will be done to you. The underlying message being imparted is that so far, the earth has been wounded by human beings. Least attention has been paid to heal it. It can be inferred that healing earth means actually healing human beings. The use of pronoun 'you' is both inclusive and exclusive.

It is evident from the history we have been so far wounding the earth. We never paid attention towards healing the earth. So, now the time has come that if we want to heal ourselves, we would have to protect or heal the earth because your future is melting. So here, your is inclusive and exclusive which may be for individual country or may be universalized as well. If this process continues for some time more. The time may come

when there would be water everywhere on the surface of the earth and survival of human being may become impossible.

The analysis of the data reveals that the slogans selected for the present study embody environmental slogans related to UN Environment Programme advertisements, Climate marches (2019–2024), International NGOs (WWF, Greenpeace) and Activities of School/college Environment Day in different countries.

### **Semiotic Analysis**



Figure 1: There Is No Planet B

### **Language Choices**

The slogan consists of a straightforward statement that has a heavy modal connotation of ending. The motto No Planet B also uses metonymy to make climate change sound less complicated as an irreparable loss. The use of capital letter 'B' gives the image a vivid contrast and further makes the image memorable. It implies that so far, we have been destroying the planet 'A' (the Earth) which is the only place for human beings and other living beings to live. The use of capital letters and bold font implies the severity of the issue and this typographic technique is mostly used to make certain things/ ideology more prominent and visible from a distance.

### **Emotional Appeals**

Through the slogan under analysis the element of fear and urgency has been propagated. The inclusion of an innocent bird in frightened form adds to the emotional appeal of the text. The young bird metaphorically stands for the future of human and non-human living beings. The slogan elicits the feelings of moral responsibility by making environmental destruction permanent. The innocent bird is standing on the verge of ice berg that is melting and may get dangerous for living beings any moment. This is indirect threat to the survival of living beings on planet 'A' (the earth).

### **Visual Framing**

The photograph focuses on the innocent child bird and the planet. Up to some extent the bird seems helpless and afraid lest its survival should come to an end., which is the representation of innocence and helplessness. The sadness on the face of the bird and

muted color in the image also help make the seriousness of environmental loss more tangible. The framing focuses the attention on the slogan as a warning to everybody but not as a political comment.



Figure 2: Act Now, Save Tomorrow

### Language Choices

The slogan includes imperative forms of verbs (Act, Save), which form direct appeals to action has been mentioned implicitly. The imperative mode of language is used when something is required urgently. The use of double imperative implies the urgency on one hand and the degree of stress being laid through this slogan on the other through this slogan. The implied threat is that if 'We' the human beings of the world delay in taking steps to save the world, the results would be disastrous as is obvious from the fire surrounding the globe. This fire may be taken as a symbol of consumption of the natural resources in the industries. The fire breaking out frequently in the forests of Europe and other countries is yet another symbol representations of the burning fire in the semiotic under analysis. The picture may affirm Eliot's notion about the 'World is on fire'. The colors used are symbol of danger. Moreover, the time difference between now and tomorrow creates a cause-and-effect connection with the idea that what is done now dictates what becomes of tomorrow. If we do not take steps to save our environment today, our tomorrow would not be pleasant one.

### Emotional Appeals

The slogan is appealing to hope and responsibility. Though there is a sense of urgency, it does not take the tone of despair, as it provides a solution-oriented narrative. The title of a phrase is Save Tomorrow, which promotes optimism and agency.

### Visual Framing

The melting Earth picture under the text is a graphic dramatizing of immediacy of the climate. The vivid colors and big fonts are used to improve readability and the assertiveness of the message. The framing makes the viewers active rather passive and demands immediate action in positive direction. The framing used in the picture is highly ideological and urges the viewers to save the environment.

## **Linguistic Moves Used**

### **Metaphors and Personification.**

The Earth is Speaking: Are you listening?

Identifies Earth as a person and causes moral responsibility and dialogue between people and nature.

- “Your Future Is Melting”

Refers to melting as a symbol of climate degradation.

### **Urgency and Modality**

There is a dominance of modal verbs such as Act Now and the use of imperative:

- Act
- Save
- Heal

These are indications of moral compulsion and urgency.

### **The Pronoun of collectiveness**

Pronouns highlight solidarity, unity and collectiveness:

- We need nature
- Your future
- Our planet

## **Multimodal Features**

### **Color Symbolism**

- Green: renewal, hope
- Blue: water, purity
- Red/Orange: danger, urgency

### **Visual Icons**

#### **Common imagery used includes:**

The setting globe (global responsibility):

- Flames / melting ice (threat)
- Leaves, plants (renewal)
- Future generations (children).

### **Typography**

Capitalized words with bold font (e.g., ACT NOW) marks it more urgent and insistent.

## **Eco linguistic Patterns**

### **Moral Framing**

Human Justice = Climate Justice.

Relates the ecology with the social rights.

### **Ecocentric Shift in Anthropocentric.**

- Nature Doesn't Need Us -We Need Nature.

It denies anthropocentrism and reinvents ecological reliance.

According to the narrative of care and healing, the health care professionals must ensure the patient's safety when administering medically necessary treatment. The health care professionals should provide security to the patient when offering medically necessary care according to the narrative of care and healing.

- Heal the Earth, Heal Yourself

Designates environmental responsibility as individual health.

### **Global Unity and Local Resonance**

The slogans represent issues of concern in many cultures and include the serious issues such as human survival, health, justice, and protection for future generations.

### **Ecological Morality and Appeals to Ethics.**

The vast majority of slogans also include moral judgments of the human beings:

- duty
- guilt
- urgency
- collective responsibility

### **Emotional and Visual Persuasion.**

Emotional appeal is greatly reinforced by multimodal design used in the coinage of slogans as they are considered global as well as local artifacts.

## **Discussion**

Climate slogans are effective tools for the dissemination of environment friendly discourse. They embody complicated ecological concepts using terse linguistic and multimodal resources. The slogans and their linguistic coinage implies their significance in creating and promoting awareness among the masses about their responsibilities towards ecological ideologies. It is observed that these slogans contain the voices of the world, highlighting the global ecological issues, and the local issues are raised through metaphorical interpretations, cultural values, and symbolic images. This affirms Olausson's (2011) views that globalized climate discourse is culturalized but should also be synchronized with the changing global trends. Moreover, urgency and emotional appeal has been added through multimodal features such as color, icons, layout and framing. Eco linguistic discourse play an important role in making the people sensitized about



ecological issues and how to make the planet Earth worth living for all species. factors construct discourses of wellbeing, care and solidarity.

### **Conclusion**

The present study was undertaken to decode the slogans related to climate change and environment friendly issues. The data collected for the study comprises the slogans having linguistic and semiotic features. It is because the methodology used is integrated in nature. The analysis of the data reveals that no use of language is neutral. The prominent linguistic moves employed in the collected data include, use of metaphors, (our future is melting), shift from anthropocentric to eco-centric approach (nature does not need , us, We need nature), use of modal verbs and imperative tone (act now, save future), use of pronoun showing unity and power (We need nature), use of typographic technique in the form of capital letters and bold font (ACT NOW) and color symbolism. All these moves are ideological and carry bundle of interpretations about the significance of getting nature friendly in our thinking and action. The blend of global and local trends, techniques and concerns are meant to highlight the issue globally and locally through the well-crafted language of the environment friendly slogans.

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