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Framing a more-than-human world: An ecolinguistic and eco-critical discourse analysis of framing in selected US oceanic discourse websites

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Abstract

The linguistic construction of non-human beings in the media landscape is a critical factor in shaping their social perception, which in turn influences anthropogenic actions toward them. Notably, recent studies have revealed a disturbing trend: In addition to climatic stressors, human activities increasingly impact marine life and habitats. Although much of what we know about this trend is largely from empirical findings from marine science, this study examines oceanic discourse from an ecolinguistic perspective. The main aim of this study is to critically explore the framings of marine-ecological-oriented topics in selected US oceanic blogs, what they embody for ecological sustainability, and other forms of story employed to activate those frames. Data for this study were gathered from blog posts published on two ocean websites, Ocean Conservancy and Oceanbites, and were subjected to discourse analysis. The findings show that writers of oceanic blog posts deploy clusters of linguistic patterns, which reflect forms of story such as convictions and salience, to frame the more-than-human world ideology and to tell a story that portrays marine life as critical actors in co-constructing a sustainable ecosystem. Embedded in the discourse are frames that can potentially redefine the distorted anthropocentric views on oceans and their inhabitants. These findings are significant as they offer a new perspective on the role of language in shaping humans' views of the marine environment, and they provide a potential pathway for redefining our relationship with the oceans.

Keywords: framing; salience; oceanic discourse; positive discourse analysis; marine life; ecological sustainability

1. Introduction

The ocean, which covers about 71% of the earth's surface, is crucial in shaping the earth's ecology and climate (Costanza, 1999). Several studies have underscored the vast array of positive effects of oceans on humans and ecosystems, spanning from ecological and social to life-sustaining benefits (Costanza, 1999; Martínez et al., 2007; Patterson et al., 2008). For instance, Patterson (2008) argues that the ocean's significance extends beyond ecological importance; it encompasses significant economic benefits on both global and national scales. He further asserts that "much of the world's tourism industry is based on coastal attractions and activities, and the oceans still provide the major means of international transport for cargo" (p. 3). In addition to its global economic significance, the ocean's biodiversity also contributes significantly to ecosystem stability (see Patterson et al., 2008). Discourse on marine biodiversity and ecosystem stability is highly important in marine studies. Further, past studies in oceanography and marine ecology have highlighted the spiritual and cultural values attached to the oceans by many marine communities of the ocean (see, e.g., Nona, 2003; Sunde, 2008; Thomson, 2007). Thus, it is unsurprising that McNeil (2008) refers to the oceans as the earth's bedrock of life.

Despite the positive ecological impact of the oceans, research on ocean advocacy has increasingly been unearthing the alarming impact of non-climatic factors such as plastic pollution affecting ocean life. In addition to climate-related pressures on marine life, anthropogenic actions are rapidly and significantly worsening the ocean ecosystems (Dermawan et al., 2022). Whilst findings from studies in environmental science have reported that oceans have adaptive capacity and specific measures can be taken to increase their resilience to climate pressures (see Burkett & Davidson, 2012), it is critical to amplify that they can only bear such ecological stress for a short time (Dermawan et al., 2022). While it is glaring that scholars in the environmental sciences, e.g., oceanography and marine biology, are making frantic efforts in their research to provide insights into ways of shaping anthropogenic behaviors toward the ocean, such scholarship and ecological responsibility extend to the soft sciences, particularly linguistics. In fact, it is possible that all the humanities fields can make meaningful contributions to ecological sustainability (Angwah, 2020).

Recent studies have shown that the "linguistics" in ecolinguistics transcends unearthing narratives about unsustainability perpetuated by the prevalent industrial civilization and human-induced actions to also encompass the new stories or narratives and how language functions in the relationship between humans, non-human beings, and the ecosystems (Stibbe, 2015, 2021; Poole, 2022). Much of the available literature within ecolinguistics research has explored linguistic representations of animals, natural disasters, natural elements, climate change, and more through the lenses of critical discourse analysis (CDA), eco-critical discourse analysis (ECDA), or corpus-assisted discourse analysis. For example, Stibbe (2003), Döring (2018), and Poole and Micalay-Hurtado (2022) employed these theoretical frameworks respectively. However, until recently, there has been little interest

in oceanic discourse from an ecolinguistics lens.

While Kronfeld-Goharani (2015) and Novitasari and Rohmah (2023) have made contributions to the oceanic discourse from an ecolinguistics standpoint, there is still a noticeable and intriguing research gap in the discourse on oceans and marine life from a discursive and ecolinguistic perspective. This study aims to fill this crucial gap by drawing on Stibbe's framework (2015, 2021) and positive discourse analysis (Martin, 2004; Stibbe, 2018). It examines framings and the language of convictions and salience surrounding critical topics such as plastic pollution, oil spills, and marine organisms in the ocean. The study focuses on the oceanic blogs of two prominent US-based non-profit organizations — Ocean Conservancy and Oceanbites. The potential impact of this study's findings is immense, as they can inspire a new narrative and understanding of our relationship with the oceans, leading to more sustainable practices. The research questions pertinent to this study are as follows:

1) What are the different kinds of framings in the discourse, and what values do they embody from an eco-critical perspective?
2) What are other linguistic and rhetorical manifestations of the new stories we live by in the selected oceanic discourse blogs?
3) Based on the researcher's ecological philosophy, which aligns with Stibbe's (2015, 2021) ecosophy, are the framings in this discourse beneficial, ambivalent, or destructive?

2. Eco-critical discourse analysis and ecolinguistics

Previous studies have discussed the different strands of ecolinguistics (see, for example, LeVasseur, 2015; Döring, 2018). According to LeVasseur (2015), based on the historical accounts of ecolinguistics, the field strands are based on the works of specific researchers: first, Einar Haugen, who came up with the work he titled "The Ecology of Language"; second, Michael Halliday, whose work contributes into eco-critical language awareness; and lastly, Nettle and Romaine, whose work focused on language extinction. Döring (2018) drew upon a considerable amount of literature (Döring, 2005; Fill, 1996; Mühlhäusler,1996; Trampe,1990) to posit that from a conceptual standpoint, ecolinguistics can be divided into the following strands: (1) ecology of language, (2) ecological linguistics, and (3) critical and applied ecolinguistics. Döring (2018) argues that the third strand entails the interaction between language and linguistic patterns regarding eco-critical discourse analysis (p. 294). Thus, he notes the methodological relationship and area of divergence between critical discourse analysis (CDA) and eco-critical discourse analysis (ECDA). On the former, he maintains that CDA and ECDA share an applied nature in their research. On the latter, he draws upon van Dijk (2015) to claim that, while CDA practically deals with the discursive structures and how they enact, confirm, legitimize, and reproduce power relations, ECDA prioritizes the way discursive structures are enacting, reproducing, legitimizing, confirming

and challenging the framings of ecological issues.

However, Arran Stibbe, the founder of the International Ecolinguistics Association, has already drawn our attention to a comprehensive framework for analyzing a wide range of texts to uncover what he calls "the stories we live". In his book *Ecolinguistics: Language, Ecology and the Stories We Live By* (Stibbe, 2015, 2021), he presents a framework that is not only comprehensive but also intriguing, as it employs a variety of methodologies from other fields of inquiry, including critical discourse analysis. The following is the way he describes the framework in the second edition of his book:

> The approach of this book is to build a simplified framework for analysing the stories we live by through drawing together a number of linguistic theories. These include critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2014), frame theory (Lakoff & Wehling, 2012), metaphor theory (Müller, 2008), appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005), identity theory (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006), fact construction (Potter, 1996), theories of erasure and salience (drawing on van Leeuwen, 2008) and linguistic narratology (Toolan 2018). (Stibbe, 2021, pp. 9–10)

Ecolinguistics entails a range of diverse methods and objectives (Steffensen & Fill, 2014, as cited in Stibbe, 2017). It is hence unsurprising that Stibbe's (2015, 2021) framework of ecolinguistics draws upon a range of methods from different fields.

3. Theoretical frameworks

Given this study's discursive focus, it is built around three theoretical works: frame theory (Lakoff, 2004, 2008), positive discourse analysis (Stibbe, 2018), and Stibbe's framework on ecolinguistics (Stibbe, 2015, 2021).

3.1. Lakoff's notion of framing

One of the significant findings of cognitive science is that humans think in terms of conceptual structures — framing and metaphors (Lakoff, 2014). According to Lakoff (2004), frames are cognitive structures that influence our perception of the world. Lakoff's perspective on "framing" stems from the perspective of cognitive linguistics and brain sciences (see Andor, 2016; Lakoff, 2010). He conceptualizes framings as cognitive structures through which people can make sense of the world or realities around them (Lakoff, 2010; Lakoff & Wehling, 2016). For certain truths to be correctly understood or seen, Lakoff proposes that framing is sometimes needed (Lakoff, 2008). Commenting on how we frame the environment, he argues that "words are defined relative to frames, and hearing a word can activate its frame … in the brain of a hearer" (Lakoff, 2010, p. 73). This view is supported by Stibbe (2015, 2021), who writes that frames come to mind through trigger words.

3.2. Stibbe's framework

Stibbe (2021) has provided nine forms of stories, what he refers to as mental models in people's minds and their linguistic manifestations, as a comprehensive theoretical basis for research in ecolinguistics. These stories include ideology, framing, metaphor (a type of framing), evaluation, identity, conviction, erasure, salience, and narrative. In addition to the view that these forms of stories are cognitive structures in people's minds, Stibbe (2021) asserts that these structures are also culturally contextualized. In other words, these cognitive models can be shaped by cultural beliefs and prevailing orientations in a given linguistic, epistemic, or discourse community. In this study, the researcher focuses on framings (including metaphors), convictions, and salience.

3.3. Positive discourse analysis

The last theoretical model relevant to this study is positive discourse analysis (PDA). A considerable amount of literature has investigated ecologically destructive discourses that pervade prominent domains of language use and registers, including media spaces, sustainability reports, public debates, agricultural business discourse, political rhetoric, etc. (see Stibbe, 2003; Cook & Sealey, 2018, among others). However, Martin (2004) and Stibbe (2018) have adopted a broader perspective and argue for a positive discourse analysis. PDA attempts to "search for new stories we live by" (Stibbe, 2018, p. 170). In Stibbe's later work (Stibbe, 2021), he contended that the life-sustaining relationship between humans and the physical environment is central to the entire discipline of ecolinguistics. Since the role of language in this life-sustaining relationship between humans and the ecosystem is of utmost importance to ecolinguistics, such inspiring stories are of interest to the current study. Additionally, this study references the typology of environmental framing in Mateu and Domínguez (2019).

4. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach, using eco-critical discourse analysis tools — framing frameworks and positive discourse analysis — to analyze the data. At various points during this research, the data were drawn from two prominent US-based oceanic websites, Ocean Conservancy and Oceanbites, published between 2016 and 2024. Specifically, the data sourced from these oceanic websites comprised five blog posts, which were divided into 12 excerpts for analysis in this study. Two factors primarily influenced the rationale for selecting these two non-profit organizations' oceanic websites. First, these organizations' ecosophy gleaned from their mission statements (see Appendix) resonate so much with the researcher in this study. Second is their engagement metric (the number of readers visiting them). The researcher employed SimilarWeb, a web analytics tool, to gain insights into the traffic, engagement metrics, and audience demographics of websites under

study. On the one hand, the result for Ocean Conservancy reveals that it generated an average of 299.2K monthly visits between January and March 2024. Regarding demographic metrics, the top countries include the United States (73.17%) and Canada (5.05%). On the other hand, Oceanbites generated up to 58.2k readers between January and March 2024, and the top countries include the United States (15.23%), Afghanistan (2.95%), and Argentina (2.4%).

5. Results and data analysis

The eco-critical discourse analysis delves into the rhetorical and linguistic moves deployed in framing (i) the challenges bedeviling the marine ecosystems and (ii) the positive evaluation of specific marine species, as well as the level of convictions demonstrated by the writers of the articles.

In his comment on framing, Stibbe (2015) described the problem and solution nexus, particularly with regard to climate change, and posited that climate change can be framed as a problem. He argues that when environmental issues are conceptualized as problems, they should inevitably call for a solution; otherwise, such matters are better referred to as predicaments. Below is a classic example of a problem frame with its attendant solution in oceanic discourse.

Table 1: Problem-solution frame

Excerpt	**Text**
Excerpt 1	Every year, 11 million metric tons of plastics enter our ocean. Nearly all of these plastics are made from fossil fuels, including crude oil, natural gas liquids, and coal … so, the plastics that escape to our ocean are like a slow-motion oil spill that is happening every day all around the world. This spill is a *pervasive threat* to ocean life and coastal communities. (Ocean Conservancy, September 24, 2021)
Excerpt 2	We must confront skyrocketing plastic production, or climate change and plastic pollution will both get worse. (Ocean Conservancy, September 24, 2021)

Table 2: Analysis of framing in the above excerpts

Source frame: Problem	**Target domain: Plastic production**
Problem	Plastic pollution
Solution	We must confront plastic production.
Structure: We must confront skyrocketing plastic production, or climate change and plastic pollution will both get worse.	Entailment: If we confront plastic production, climate change will improve, and the pollution of marine ecosystems will be mitigated.

The writer metaphorically frames "plastics" that escape to the ocean as "a slow-motion oil spill". The metaphor parallels plastic pollution to the well-known damaging effects of the oil spill on marine life, thereby foregrounding the environmental impact that bedevils the ocean ecosystem. The word "threat" is the trigger word indicating the oil spill's adverse effects on marine life. Here, the problem frame is activated (in the reader's mind)[1] through the adjectival modifier "pervasive". Since the writer has stated metaphorically that plastics in the ocean bear a resemblance to "oil spills", it is likelier that readers will picture plastics in the ocean as having pervasive threats to ocean life. By implication, the metaphorical reasoning pattern is that plastic pollution is destructive to the marine world. From an ecolinguistic perspective, especially the ecosophy of Stibbe (2021, pp. 14–15), this metaphor can be said to be beneficial because it sheds light on the gravity of the impact of "plastic pollution" on the "well-being" of ocean life. The mapping of the destructive potentialities of oil spills in oceans to the effects of plastic pollution on the ocean can potentially shape the perceptions of the intended audience and, in turn, change the behaviors that lead to plastic disposal in the sea.

As can be gleaned in excerpt 2, "plastic pollution" is framed as a problem that we, as a collective, have the power to solve. The writer employs the inclusive pronoun "we" alongside a high modality — "must" — which conveys great conviction in the recommended solution and a sense of shared responsibility. The framing of the solution follows a reasoning pattern that conveys the entailment "if we take action to reduce plastic production, we can improve climate change and mitigate the pollution of marine ecosystems".

Table 3: A: Problem-solution frame; B: Growthism

Excerpt	**Text**
Excerpt 3	There is a surge of **investment** in new plastic production right now. As the fossil fuel industry sees its future **shrink** in energy and transportation fuels, it is banking on **growth** in plastics to make up the difference. If that **growth** occurs, we will continue to rely on and invest in fossil fuel infrastructure at a time when we need a rapid transition to a clean energy economy to ensure a livable planet and healthy ocean.
Excerpt 4	The most direct way to reduce CO_2 emissions, keep plastic out of the ocean, and ensure healthy, livable communities is to prevent this massive new wave of fossil-fueled plastic production and use. (Ocean Conservancy, September 24, 2021)

[1] Lakoff (2014) argues that frames are in the synapses of our brains.

Table 4: Analysis of the above excerpts

Source frame: Fossil economy	**Target domain: Fossil-fueled plastic production**
Problem	Investment in fossil-fueled plastic production distracts from the clean energy economy.
Solution	Preventing the new wave of investment in plastic production
Structure: Continuous reliance and investment in fossil fuel infrastructure is not more beneficial to our economy than transitioning into a clean energy economy.	Entailment: If we do not tackle the new wave of plastic production, we will not have a habitable planet and a sustainable marine habitat.

In the above excerpt, the alarming surge in plastic production is framed as an impediment to transitioning into clean energy, with the fossil fuel industries at the helm of this production. The source frame, fossil fuel economy, is evoked through elements or trigger words such as "investment", "shrink", "growth", and "energy". In other words, the source frame activates the underlying ideology of the fossil fuel industry, growthism. This actively demonstrates that frames can be deeply embedded within another frame. Furthermore, the target domain is the new wave of plastic production. This framing portrays the fossil fuel industry's future as "shrinking", necessitating a significant investment in plastic production. The ecological problem framing brings to the forefront the imminent ecological crises that could potentially ravage both the planet Earth and the ocean, all due to the growthism that drives the fossil economy.

There is compelling evidence that this framing is beneficial for several reasons: firstly, it does not relegate the social actors, the fossil fuel industry, responsible for the investment of the fossil; secondly, it implicitly underlines the extrinsic values of the fossil fuel industry — a relentless pursuit of economic growth through banking on plastics production instead of exploring more ecologically sustainable alternatives. In Stibbe's comment on wellbeing, a strand of his ecosophy, he argues that "the goal is not just living in the sense of survival, but living well, with high wellbeing" (2021, p. 15). Given this, it is probable that the solution frame, seen in excerpt 4, mirrors the "wellbeing" ecological philosophy of the discourse community to which the writer belongs. According to Lakoff (2004), that is the essence of framing: "getting language that fits your worldview" (p. 4). As seen from the excerpt, with a high modality (the adverb "most"), the writer asserts that the solution to CO_2 emissions and eliminating plastics in the ocean lies in addressing the increasing fossil-fueled plastic production.

Table 5: Framing plastic in the ocean as an ecological problem

Excerpt	**Text**
Excerpt 5	Plastics. At the mall it means credit card, in Mean Girls it's the popular clique, in the oceans it's pollution. (Oceanbites, July

	19, 2017)

Excerpt 5 above is slightly different from excerpts 1–4. The rhetorical pattern of the frame, which entails the use of parallelism,[2] creates a structure that foregrounds the "ecological problem" frame hrough the trigger word "pollution". Such a frame will inevitably evoke in readers' minds the anthropogenic actions that lead to plastic ending up in the ocean despite the absence of the phrase "anthropogenic action" in the frame. Furthermore, readers of the excerpt are likely to have mixed emotions, from thinking about how plastics are used in our daily transactions to how they are used in popular comedy movies (*Mean Girls*) and how plastics can threaten ocean ecosystems. This indicates that "plastics" have different interpretations in different contexts. It also highlights that plastics are not a threat to the ecosystem until they are found in the oceans. Implicitly, this frame draws attention to the potential benefits of plastics (resource frame) while highlighting the context in which "plastics" become a challenge — in the ocean. After all, every word within a frame can potentially evoke its frame (see Lakoff, 2006).

Table 6: Ecological/scientific value framing — salience patterns

Excerpt	**Text**	**Linguistic features present**
Excerpt 6	The oceans are *home* to *small algae* — called phytoplankton — that perform photosynthesis, just like land plants. This *process converts carbon dioxide into oxygen, removing carbon from our atmosphere* and *reducing the effects of global warming*. (Oceanbites, December 15, 2023)	Framing, metaphor, and salience
Excerpt 7	Some of the carbon used by Phytoplankton sinks to the bottom of the ocean in the form of organic material (such as the bodies of algae themselves). This process of "carbon export" effectively cools the earth by removing carbon from the atmosphere and storing it deep sea, where it can remain for a long time. (Oceanbites, December 15, 2023)	Framing and salience
Excerpt 8	… phytoplankton and zooplankton. These tiny organisms perform a critically important service for the climate: like trees, they uptake carbon, helping the ocean absorb one-third of our greenhouse gas emissions. (Ocean Conservancy, September 24, 2021)	Framing, metaphor, and salience

[2] Commenting on foregrounding strategies in ecological discourse, Virdis (2022) identified parallelism as a helpful strategy.

Excerpt 9	Corals are like speed bumps. They slow down waves and lessen wave energy, protecting coastlines from hurricanes, cyclones, and tsunamis. Coral reefs protect the shorelines in 81 countries around the world, sheltering the 200 million people living along those coasts. (Ocean Conservancy, July 25, 2016)	Framing, metaphor, and salience
Excerpt 10	Corals are like nurseries. They provide hiding homes and hiding places for marine animals, large and small. An estimated 25% of all fish species call reefs home, and even more fish species spend part of their young lives there. Losing reefs to ocean warming or acidification costs animals their home. (Ocean Conservancy, July 25, 2016)	Framing, metaphor, and salience
Excerpt 11	Corals are like history books. Coral's hard calcium carbonate skeletons contain bands, like tree rings, that record environmental changes in temperature, water chemistry, and sediment. These records help scientists reconstruct what past ages were like before humans kept records. (Ocean Conservancy, July 25, 2016)	Framing, metaphor, and salience
Excerpt 12	Corals, specifically the Acropora species, regularly spew bacteria-filled mucus into the sea to defend against environmental and biological stressors. The mucus can trap and carry particles, energy, and large amounts of organic matter throughout the ocean. (Oceanbites, March 22, 2024)	Framing and salience

Excerpts 6 and 7 are drawn from a blog post highlighting the significant impact of small algae and their ocean habitat on the ecosystem. These excerpts reflect the ecosystem values they produce. The use of marine scientific lexical items to foreground the saliency and ecological importance of small algae and the ocean to the ecosystem evokes an ecological value frame. Mateu and Domínguez (2019) contend that ecosystem value frames are enriched by scientific vocabulary. Moreover, the representation of algae (phytoplankton) as actors in material processes depicts that this marine creature is capable of purposeful ecological activity. In particular, the metaphor employed in excerpt 6 effectively characterizes algae's role in ecological sustainability, likening them to plants due to their photosynthetic roles. The metaphorical expression "… that perform photosynthesis, just

like land plants" activates an ecological value frame in mind since most people can relate to the photosynthetic functions of the plants. Here, the source frame is "plants", while the target domain is "algae". Therefore, it is plausible to consider this framing and excerpt 8 as beneficial because the material processes performed by small algae (phytoplankton) and zooplankton housed in the oceans mitigate climate change.

Excerpts 9–11 are all from the same article, which creatively builds prominence and highlights the saliency of corals. The rich deployment of conceptualization through metaphor aims to activate specific frames in readers' minds. Steen (2016) correctly refers to this as "metaphor in thought" — the cross-domain mapping and representation of the target using the source. Similarly, in an interview with Lakoff (see Andor, 2016), he maintains that metaphors map frames onto other frames. For example, the source frame in excerpt 9 is speed bumps, which maps corals onto beings that provide "safety". In addition to the "safety" frame activated through the metaphor, the excerpt contains trigger words such as "protecting", "protect", and "sheltering", which bring the overarching ecological value (safety) frame to mind. The underlying metaphorical reasoning pattern in excerpts 9 through 11 is that corals are fundamental non-human beings in the oceans that (i) provide safety (excerpt 9), (ii) provide shelter (excerpt 10), and (iii) provide archival, historical, and scientific values (excerpt 11). In another article (excerpt 12), the ecological value of corals is foregrounded. Here, corals are activated by being depicted as agents for conserving the ocean ecosystem; they "spew … mucus into the sea to defend against environmental and biological stressors". Based on the ecosophy of the researcher in this study, the implication of this salient pattern (what I call positive framing) brings to mind the "more-than-human-world" framing.

6. Discussion

Frames in this study are conceived as cognitively efficient tools for constructing and communicating ideas and telling new stories to shape people's perceptions and help them adopt strategies for environmental conservation. According to Nisbet (2009), "frames are interpretive storylines that set out a specific train of thought in motion, communicating why an issue might be a problem, who might be responsible for it, and what should be done about it" (p. 15). In response to the first research question, the problem-solution frame is the primary one identified in this study. Based on the eco-critical analysis of the excerpts that embed this frame, this study argues that oceanic discourse writers subtly frame ideas on ocean conservation by not only crafting compelling and evidence-based stories on how anthropogenic actions negatively impact the health of the marine ecosystem but also framing the requisite solutions to curb this menace. Based on the ecological philosophy of the researcher of this study, the problem-solution-related frames employed in the selected oceanic discourse are beneficial, particularly because they not only point out industries responsible for the problems but also (i) proffer solutions that make connections to eco-friendly effects, (ii) demonstrate the strength of convictions through facticity

patterns on the recommended solutions and (iii) employ ideological inclusive "we" pronoun, thereby emphasizing that protecting the marine ecosystem is a collective responsibility. It is, therefore, possible to hypothesize that the environmental problem-cause-solution postulated in the oceanic discourse are a call for social actions.

One intriguing finding in this study is the interplay of frames, where one frame can be activated within another. A notable example is the problem frame identified in excerpts 3–4, which also incorporates the growthism frame associated with the fossil fuel industry. The use of words such as "investment", "production", and "growth" within the problem frame evokes the extrinsic values of the fossil fuel industry — growthism. This finding aligns with Lakoff's (2006) view on framing in politics, where he suggests that every word defined within a frame can evoke the frame of that word. It is not surprising that the fossil fuel industry is heavily investing in the plastic industry, often framing it as a necessity, which distracts us from reality; that is, what growthism intrinsically entails. For example, Haque (2013) emphasizes that growthism promotes growth at all costs. It is, however, commendable that the author of excerpt 4 stressed that this is a distraction from the main deal — clean economy.

Similar to the problem-solution frame is the ecological problem frame in excerpt 5. In this particular excerpt, due to the rhetorical structure of the frame, the erasure of human actions is present. It is worth noting that the rhetorical strategy, parallelism, employed here necessitated the erasure. Given this, the researcher in this study argues that trigger words in the frame (pollution), if all things are equal, can activate the intended frame. Put simply, the parallelism employed in excerpt 5 is a discursive tool that foregrounds the pollution frame. Readers are more likely to think about when their actions led to the pollution of the oceans, even though the word "humans" is absent in the frame. Lakoff's (2008, p. 20) reflection corroborates this position on framing: "Can I freely choose not to think certain thoughts when certain words are used and when my brain is tuned to activate those thoughts? We may have no choice." In other words, we may have no choice but to conceive the thoughts sparked by the trigger words in the frame (see Stibbe 2015, 2021).

The third frame identified in this study is the ecological value of oceans and marine life. The findings in this study demonstrate that ecological value framings are present in oceanic discourse. As Entman (1993) posits, framings fundamentally entail salience and selection. The positive and mind-shaping framing of the salient attributes of the ocean and its inhabitants by writers of the selected oceanic blogs characterizes them as essential components of our unsustainable civilization while foregrounding their values. This, however, transcends the distorted and self-centered anthropocentric views often portrayed by ambivalent discourses. In Virdis's (2022) classic critique of ambivalent and destructive discourses, she contends that these discourses primarily express anthropocentric perspectives on nature elements. It is, therefore, logical to posit that the demonstrable set of salient patterns (positive framings) in the oceanic discourse attests to the shared culture or orientation (social cognition) of the oceanic writer's epistemic community. This position is consistent with previous research (see Alexander, 2009; Entman, 1993; Stibbe, 2021; van

Dijk, 2009). For example, Alexander (2009, p. 3) notes that it is increasingly accepted that the representation of the natural world is socially constructed. This means that enacting, legitimizing, and perpetuating a specific story about nature elements is rooted in the dominant culture of one's epistemic and ideological community.

7. Conclusion

This study set out to examine framing in selected oceanic discourse blogs. It has attempted to investigate oceanic discourse and found them beneficial because writers in this space advocate for protecting the marine ecosystem, which covers a significant portion of Mother Earth. Findings in this study reveal that writers of the oceanic blogs under study employ framings and other conceptual structures such as metaphors, salience, and conviction to portray a more-than-human world reality, shaping perceptions on the sustainability of our seemingly unsustainable civilization and implicitly challenging the self-centered anthropogenic actions, ideologies (growthism, for example), and narratives that worsen our relationship with the marine world. In his work on the brain in language, Lakoff comments that "what makes language powerful is its capacity to activate, communicate, regulate, and even change all aspects of our understanding" (Lakoff, 2008, p. 232). Drawing inspiration from positive discourse analysis, this study advocates for embracing the life-sustainable models, ideologies, and new orientations for sustainable practices and relationships between humans and the ocean ecosystem, as represented in the oceanic websites investigated in this study.

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