



LANGUAGE AND NATURE: AN ECOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE  
ANIMATED MOVIE *RIO 2*

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**ABSTRACT**

*This study aims to analyze the Salience and Evaluation in the animated movie Rio 2 and discover the lexical choices related to ecology in the selected movie. To achieve these objectives, the model of ecolinguistics presented by Stibbe (2015) is employed. There are many areas of life that are magnified and appraisal patterns are also found throughout the plot of the movie. This study has adopted a mixed method of research and uses purposive sampling while collecting data. Transcript of the movie Rio 2 is used to analyze the data. After the analysis it has been found that the movie is teeming with lexical choices that have relation to environment and ecology and many nouns, noun phrases, verbs and adjectives are evidence of this connection. Moreover, it is discovered that the movie not only contain countless appraisal patterns but also try to put light on many aspects of environment and ecology. It is also found that magnification of various areas of life is quite apparent in the transcript. The appraisal patterns here point to the positive or negative evaluation and salience refers to the prominence of things, individuals and notions. It is also suggested that the movie can be studied for erasure and ecofeministic elements in future.*

**Keywords:** Ecolinguistics, evaluation, nature, salience, appraisal patterns

**INTRODUCTION**

There is hardly any debate among linguistic scholars that language is the most effective tool to influence the perceptions of individuals and societies. Language was begun to be studied in scientific terms with the emergence of Linguistics and many gifted scholars worked on the various aspects of communication systems. Although the word ‘linguistics’ was first used in the first part of the nineteenth century, the research on the language has been going on for many centuries. During this time, many new subfields originated out of this. Linguistics covered almost all of them and even literature which some may want to be studied and analyzed separately. Not many of those scholars, who worked on language and linguistics, thought of language’s relation to nature and physical surroundings. Ecology was thought to be something that may not have any logical connection with language. According to Haeckel (1886), “Ecology is the study of the relationship of the organisms with their environment”. This definition doesn’t show any link between language and ecology. Similarly, Language and linguistics were never studied in relation to environment and surroundings. However, all that changed with emergence of ecolinguistics.

Haugen (1972), defined ecology of language as “The study interactions between any given language and its environment”. Halliday (1990), linked several environmental problems to



applied linguistics. This astonishing claim raised quite a few eyebrows but many scholars started investigating into the phenomena. International Ecological Linguistics Association defines Ecological Linguistics as “Ecological Linguistics explores the role of language in the life-sustaining interactions of humans, other species and the physical environment”. Stibbe (2015) presented a model containing many theories about ecological linguistics. He challenges many beliefs about language and environment in his writings. As the scope of ecological linguistics expanded, it gave rise to many opportunities of studying it in different contexts and in various fields of life. One of those opportunities is investigating the texts of environmental and nature-based movies. Ecological linguistics studies were mostly done on the environmental aspects of the literary texts. However, TV and films played a leading role in talking about and showing nature and natural surroundings. This thing attracted the attention of many researchers who were looking for a chance to discover the relation between language and its physical surroundings.

Over the years, watching the movies has not something been odd in most cultures of the world but animated movies were never very popular among film-lovers in the past as they have become these days. Most of the viewers watch these movies for recreational purposes and don't bother to think about these films more than this. Some movies seem to have moral lessons or they seem to be made to create awareness in views about certain issues. But the language and physical environments used in the movies can have underlying ideas and motives that producers and writers may want to achieve through these films. These underlying ideas can be intentional or unintentional on part of the creators of these movies. This research will try to unfold those ideas and the possible aims behind them. As children are more attracted to these movies, they are more prone to undergo mindset changes because of these movies. These issues lead the researchers of language to the conclusion that these movies need to be scrutinized and examined in order to expose the underlying motives present in these movies.

### **Statement of Problem**

Climate change and environmental protection are urgent global concerns, prompting awareness efforts across various media, including animated films. These movies increasingly feature natural themes to educate audiences on ecology while embedding underlying ideologies through language. The present study applies Stibbe's (2015) ecological linguistic framework—focusing on the under-explored concepts of evaluation and salience—to analyze linguistic structures in *Rio 2* (2014) that relate to environmental protection and nature. By uncovering these elements, the research aims to reveal subconscious influences on viewers and enhance understanding of ecological debates, addressing a gap in prior studies on animated films using this theory.

### **Research Objectives**

- To identify the lexical choices used in the movie *Rio 2* analogous to ecology of language
- To analyze the different appraisal structures employed in the selected movies to represent particular phenomena positively or negatively
- To analyze the various salience patterns used to magnify certain areas of life in the selected movies

### **Research Questions**

- 1) What are the lexical choices used in the movie *Rio 2* that are analogous to ecology of language?
- 2) How are the different appraisal patterns being employed in the selected movies to represent particular phenomena positively or negatively?



- 3) How are various salience structures used to magnify certain areas of life in the selected movies?

### **Significance of the Study**

The education about environmental and commercial aspects of the films having environmental themes is gaining popularity with each passing decade. Certain features of nature and life are embellished in these films. Animated films were meant for the kids initially but now people of almost every age-group likes to watch animated movies. Awareness is something that will always be fruitful in any field of life. Most of the film-viewers nowadays seem to think that together with the entertainment, they get knowledge about the world by watching these films. But these movies often have underlying ideologies that a layman fails to detect. This study has tried to bring the possible facts in to light that has shown how these movies try to influence the thought process of the viewers about events, ideas and things. Furthermore, many of the viewers may not want these movies to tame the perception of their children in a way that they think is wrong. Certain aspects of environment are portrayed as positive and others as negative in these movies. These movies are always inspiring for a countless number of people around the world. However, the views and opinions of creators conveyed through these movies are not always as plain as they seem on the surface. Sometimes, there are underlying ideas that need to be understood by the audience and then they should form their own opinion about something that is shown in these movies. This study intends to help them in this regard. The findings of the present research will not just uncover the underlying meanings of the ecological terms used in these movies but it will also make the ideas of these movies easy to comprehend for the audience.

### **Delimitation of the Study**

The study is limited to two aspects of Ecolinguistic Theory by Stibbe (2015): Evaluation and Salience. Stibbe (2015) talks about different areas of life relating them with ecology. He discusses metaphor, framing, evaluation, ideology, salience, conviction, erasure, identity and stories we live by in his ecolinguistic theory. But the present research focuses mainly on evaluation and salience of ecological elements by Stibbe (2015). This framework is implemented on the transcript of selected animated movie *Rio 2*.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

According to Stibbe (2014) Humans have oppressed some certain systems related to humans and nonhumans and this is exposed by ecolinguistics which works in a familiar fashion. Kowalski (2013) and, Clark and Goatly (1996) argue that the oppressed ones include those who are suffering but cannot speak of it because they are either nonhuman or afraid to speak. The language and its grammar is deliberately employed in a specific way to form certain ideas about reality and therefore these ideas are not benefitting people who are important part of the world (Halliday, 2001). Language was never thought to be so closely connected to environment or at least it was not studied in combination with the physical surroundings until the emergence of Ecolinguistics few decades ago. The early ecolinguists, who were interested in language and the environment, mostly focused on the historically famous texts and their interpretation using the lens of Ecolinguistics. The evolution of language in recent past has led to the creation of certain material in language that intensifies the environmental debate in the modern era (Mühlhäusler, 2003). Although, it is still a new branch of linguistics, it has been evolving swiftly over the years. Many researchers are interested in this exciting new dimension of linguistics for its unique subject. With increasing number of researchers in this, the scope of its research



is all expanding to different fields of life. Philosophy of nature is the foundation for examination of worldview and features of language (Gavriely-Nuri, 2012).

Giebels & Taylor (2009) opined that films have become a very important factor in making people aware regarding violence. To examine films through the lens of language opens a new world of possibilities in this area of research. Indicators of grammar in the visuals of these films present an enormous glut of meanings and connotations (Blakesley, 2012). These meanings are not limited to mere visuals but the dialogues, sentences, phrases, words and even their tone can contain an abundance of connotation that are ignored normally by a common viewer. People take these visuals, words and signs for granted but there are many ideologies at work behind these words and symbols (Blakeley, 2012). The actors, directors, writers, editors, producers, production companies and even the final audience are connected in way that they become a part of the ideology that a film puts forth (Blakesley, 2012)

Susanti, Sardila, Herlinda, Marlisa, & Aramudin (2022) think that works of fiction contain a relation between gender equality and ecology. Patriarchy and capitalism are two evils of society that are hurting the natural surroundings and women folk equally. The worldwide hit animated movie sheds light on both of these issues in a unique way. The forces of nature are displayed as characters in the movie and their activities have huge consequences for the humans. The traditional mindset about the women is countered and challenged by the female protagonist Moana who has the attributes to lead instead of following the male character. On the other hand, the male character named Maui has many flaws in his personality including greed, indiscipline and misdirected use of strength. Moana through its ecofeminism helps in understanding how ill treatment of nature and surroundings can lead to chaos.

Nugroho (2019) et al tells that Moana is a movie having a sublime script, plot and lesson. It magnifies the significance of natural environment and elaborates in a very interesting way that how humans can positively contribute towards that protection of natural surroundings. The movie focuses on three facets of society throughout its storyline. The first aspect is culture that influences the thought process of the people living in certain parts of the world. Culture also plays a part in determining people's attitude towards nature, ecology and practices done to create awareness about environment. The second aspect is nature itself. The nature in the movie is presented as human characters known as Tefiti and Te Ka. Nature is depicted as very responsive and reactive to whatever people do to change it. The third aspect is nurture. Nurture is somehow of utmost importance as is connects both humans and their environment. It acts as bridge between the two. Nature cares for the humans as a mother but acts accordingly if ill-treated by them.

Zhang Ruijie and Wei He (2021) analyze language and ecology employing the philosophy of ecosophy in the schools of philosophy of China. They evaluate the relation between people and place. Several principles are studied comprehend the nature of connection between people and their place. The study also analyzes the concept of place and sense of place in a peculiar way. Both eastern wisdom in philosophy and highly valued concepts of western thought are used in connection with ecology to create an understanding of link between people and place. The researchers have analyzed semiotic means for the purpose of pointing out and evaluating their impacts on ecology. They try to make sense two major aspects by comparing them with one another. The first notion is ecology and its relation to mental approach of human brain and human behavior. The second notion is system of semiotics and its implications on mindset and actions of humans. The ecosophy discussed in this paper can be used in many other areas



relating to language, ecology and specifically ecolinguistics that possess natural similarities with it.

Norton & Hulme (2019) have selected four momentous editorial news stories about climate from the national newspapers of The United Kingdom. These stories have played a very impactful role on the issue of climate change throughout the country. Multidimensional ecolinguistic framework is used to describe these climate change newspaper stories. All of these four news stories have different approach towards climate change and also offer different solutions to this problem. Norton and Hulme also show some aspects of these stories where consensus is found as to the solution of climate change.

Stibbe (2023) describes that, with respect to presentation and demonstration, there are five types of advertisements. Some ads use the old method of glorifying the qualities of a product but more advertisers now make high moral claims in their ads by showing the product as perfect in every sense. His research is based on Coca-Cola's false advertisement that convinces people into implying that their product is good for health but the reality is of course different. There are two reasons behind his study. One objective is to make the people aware of the reality of misleading advertisements of these harmful products and consequently inducing them to resist the temptation of these ads. The second objective is to understand the technique used in these ads because same technique can be used to create awareness about the importance health and ecosystem. Advertisements describing the harmful effects of these products are very few. These counter-ads do not have the same amount of budget that ads of Coca-Cola use but use of creativity and out of the box thinking in making these counter-ads can expose these harmful ads. These counter-advertisements can be successful because they do not have money-making or any other motives. Moreover, Consumers will always be more attracted to those products that are beneficial for their health and finance. So, advertisements are very important from ecolinguistic point of view.

Naz & Hassan (2022) touch on the speeches of Greta Thunberg to conduct their ecolinguistic analysis. They show how Greta Thunberg uses linguistics tools to promote her ideology of environmental activism. Greta uses the framing technique by replacing mildly effective words with more effective words to enhance the importance of climate change issue. Greta Thunberg uses both optimistic and pessimistic tone and vocabulary in her speeches to achieve her purpose. She exploits the metaphors that evoke uncertainty. The use of these metaphors is also explained by Stibbe (2015) as the framing theory. Use of simple, direct and popular narratives against political class is also dominant in her speeches. Using the ecologically beneficial terms, she enhances the effect of her talks. One of the reasons of her rapidly growing popularity is that she uses aggressive words instead of the polite and lid ones in her speeches.

All of the researchers mentioned above have unveiled different ecolinguistic aspects, of several types of texts, employing different theoretical and analytical frameworks. Some of them have studied films, TV shows and documentaries to explore the language related to ecology and its role in a certain movie or documentary. Some have focused their research on the ecological features of the language used in newspapers, websites, educational textbooks, advertisements, speeches and religious texts. Some of them have also conducted research on animated movies but the movies used in the present research have not undergone ecolinguistic examination before. Furthermore, there are also studies available that have used the Arran Stibbe (2015) model of ecolinguistic research but they have neither employed the 'evaluation' aspect of this model in their research on almost anything nor have they previously applied the 'salience' narrative on the movies selected for the present research. This study has not only ensured the

selection of the latest sample but also presents the latest possible literature related to the research as reference.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts Arran Stubbe's (2015) Ecolinguistic Discourse Analysis as its primary framework, focusing on the narratives of evaluation (identifying positive/negative appraisals) and salience (highlighting magnified or overstated elements) to expose exploitation of nature, commercialism, and industrialization in environmental protection within the transcript of purposively selected Walt Disney animated film *Rio 2* with ecological themes. A mixed-methods design is employed, with qualitative dominance for descriptive discussion of intentions, effectiveness, and mental approaches in dialogues, supplemented by quantitative frequency counts of ecology-related words, phrases, and clauses to reveal writer partiality; data comprises verified transcripts retrieved from authentic online sources and cross-checked against digital film copies.

### DATA ANALYSIS

This section provides perceptive analysis, findings and the discussion the popular animated movie *Rio 2*.

**Table 1:** *Environmental lexical choices in Rio 2*

Phrase	Type	Clause
Malnourished	Adj	I was sick, malnourished
Extinct	Adj	The blue Spix's Macaw was thought to be practically extinct
Endangered	Adj	The Amazon is one Earth's most endangered ecosystems
Wildest	Adj	We're gonna scout the wildest
Carnival	Adj	This year's Carnival show
Untamed	Adj	"Amazon Untamed"
Tropical	Adj	Who is ready for a tropical adventure?
Scarce	Adj	Food is scarce these days.
Unnatural	Adj	Charlie! Ah! This is unnatural!
Birdly	Adj	Totally wild and very birdly
Colors	N	Here's my vision. Red, blue, green, yellow, yellow! Purple.
Amazon	N	Amazon Expedition, day seven
Rio	N	Two thousand miles from Rio
Rainforest	N	We've reached the center of the rainforest.
Plants	N	We are surrounded by plants
Animals	N	We are surrounded by plants and animals
Survival	N	Plants and animals struggling for survival



Species	N	Reunited with the bird of same species
Wheat	N	Wheat pancakes have twice the vitamins
Vitamins	N	Pancakes have twice the vitamins
Minerals	N	Twice the vitamins and minerals of regular pancakes
Blueberries	N	And with the blueberries, it's four times as tasty
City	N	I never thought I'd find one this close to the city.
Flock	N	There might be a whole flock out there.
Wild	N	We have to be get out into the wild
Ecosystems	N	Earth's most endangered ecosystems
Farming	N	Due to illegal logging and farming
Antarctica	N	Antarctica, maybe
Mosquitoes	N	They got mosquitoes that suck blood
Snakes	N	Snakes that can swallow you whole
Jungle	N	The wildest, coolest talent in the jungle!
Death	N	It's about death.
Cockatoo	N	This amazing cockatoo will reveal your future.
Monkey	N	You were dumber than a monkey
Pupa	N	It's about to enter the pupa stage.
Barbarian	N	Back, you barbarian!
Humans	N	Flying too close to the humans
Fire	N	There was fire and so much smoke.
Smoke	N	There was fire and so much smoke.
Sanctuary	N	We have found sanctuary
Roots	N	A place we can finally put down roots
Wildflower	N	My little wildflower has returned!
Droppings	N	I saw it in the droppings.
Shining	N	Look at her shining
Feathers	N	Her feathers, the glow
Moon	N	Moon beams and starlight



Starlight	N	Moon beams and starlight
Rain	N	Magical twilight, the warmest rain.
Rainbows	N	Rainbows at midnight
Clay	N	Aunt Mimi says clay is good for your digestion.
Sightseeing	N	I thought we were going sightseeing.
Turkey	N	Are you a macaw or turkey?
Hummingbirds	N	Only hummingbirds can fly backwards.
Grove	N	They have their side of the grove and we have ours.
Pet	N	What? You're a pet?
Nest	N	Do you see the nest?
Tiger	N	I've got the eye of a tiger.
Fiber	N	Been training again and eating my fiber.
Places	N	Maybe some places shouldn't be found.
Tree-huggers	N	Let's see if it (jungle) will return the favor. Tree-huggers.
Pit	N	It's a beautiful day in the Pit of Doom!
Pigeons	N	It's just a bunch of pigeons!
Pseudo-dendrobate	N	But she's a harmless pseudo-dendrobate.
Paws	N	Put your paws, talons and tails together
Talons	N	Put your paws, talons and tails together for the most amazing
Tails	N	Put your paws, talons and tails together for the most amazing talent
Emerald	N	It's the emerald we treasure
Breeze	N	The jungle's like a breeze it's a wonder
Summers	N	Maybe we can do summers in Rio.....
Shooting star	NP	A shooting star ain't really nothing to see
Spix's Macaws	NP	We are the last blue Spix's Macaws left on the planet
The river	NP	We glide effortlessly down the river
Little bird	NP	We rescued this little bird from smugglers.



Natural habitat	NP	Will release her back to her natural habitat.
Mating dance	NP	It might be some sort of mating dance.
Brazil nut	NP	It's a Brazil nut.
Illegal logging	NP	Most endangered ecosystems, due to illegal logging
Tasty mango	NP	My tasty mango
Flesh-eating piranhas	NP	Flesh-eating piranhas that... eat flesh
Poisonous tree frog	NP	A poisonous tree frog who's kept in a glass jar
Nature freaks	NP	What are they doing? Nature freaks.
Heliconius larva	NP	That's a Heliconius larva.
Jungle familia	NP	One for the jungle familia
Night skies	NP	Sparkling night skies.
Jungle survival	NP	You need to learn the basics of jungle survival.
Way of life	NP	These trees are the key to our way of life.
Mass destruction	NP	You'll be my petite weapon of mass destruction.
Intelligent species	NP	We are intelligent species with advanced problem-solving capabilities.
Birdliest bird	NP	I might not be the birdliest bird.
Creepy bugs	NP	Filled with creepy bugs, but it's ours
Furious feathers	NP	A flurry of furious feathers in your face!
Wildlife refuge	NP	The entire area will be designated as National Wildlife Refuge.
Rescue	V	Six months ago we rescued this little bird
Saved	V	Their home will be saved.
Nesting	V	The macaws should be nesting near the Brazil nut trees.
Flying	V	We found them flying too close to the humans.



Feed	V	The trees feed us.
Sustain	V	The trees feed us. They sustain us.
Thriving	V	The kids are thriving, they love being in the wild.
Trap	V	They (humans) lure you in, they trap you.
Bird up	VP	You gotta bird up, bird!

**Table 2:** *Frequencies of Environmental Terms in the Movie Rio 2*

<i>Speech Type</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
<i>N</i>	59%
<i>NP</i>	23%
<i>Adj</i>	10%
<i>V</i>	8%

Nouns and noun phrases having environmental connections incorporate a big part of the whole transcript of the film. Environment related adjectives and verbs lower in frequency as compared to the earlier ones. The film constantly tilts towards the idea of environmental protection. The lexical choices used in the film depict the purpose to create awareness for natural surroundings and Amazon rainforest in particular. Importance of flora and fauna is equally stressed in the dialogues between the characters. Human and animal characters both have the tendencies to utter the words showing concern for the jungle and its creatures. Even the characters in negative roles sarcastically describe their evil plans to label the certain actions as good and others as bad in the film world. Some animal characters even show their distaste for the unnatural and modern way of life through their speech.

#### **Traces of Saliency in the Movie Rio 2**

*“We are the last blue Spix’s Macaws left on the planet. We have to stay safe.”*

From the onset of the story of the film, the main species that is focused as a subject of debate is described on the verge of extinction. Although the whole film is about the protection of wilderness and creatures in it but creature that represents the endangered part of nature is a kind of parrot found in Brazil only. In fact, an anthropomorphic family of Blue Spix’s Macaws is the main caste of the film around which the whole story revolves. Film not only sheds light on the topic of endangered species but also highlights it through the particular example of a bird species that looks like ordinary parrots. But not many knew about that the fact that how special these blue parrots are considering their near extinction situation in the world.

*“Six months ago we rescued this little bird from smugglers (and now we) will release her back to her natural habitat.”*

Animals are threatened by humans according to this film however, an even more interesting fact is that there no one else to rescue the environment and animals except the same intelligent beings namely Homo sapiens. The awareness this movie intends to create cannot be at the cost of annoying humans because who would like a story in which his whole race is portrayed as villains. Nonetheless, this was not the main purpose of adding some so-called good human beings to the film. One has to be realistic to the possible extent because to show some issue as a real problem, the plot should also be realistic enough to contain whatever is going on in the real world. No one would have believed a story where humans were always the culprit for the crimes against nature. So, it is only logical for the creators to put light on the other part of



humanity that is trying to save the environment and getting mocked by others as tree huggers which is a partly a sarcastic term for the people who care for environment.

*“We found them flying too close to humans.”*

A parrot belonging to a tribe is reporting to the chief parrot that he saw some parrots flying in areas where human live. Interestingly, this is depicted as a crime in that parrot society. This suggests that it is forbidden in this parrot tribe to go near humans. It is forbidden to the extent that doing so is considered a punishable crime in this community of Blue Macaws. From the humans' standpoint, film portrays people as both good and bad for nature however it is a common knowledge that animals and birds fear and dislike humans, or we can say majority of them. There are exceptions because many pets and other like animals not only like their human masters but have also developed a special attachment with them. But the word on the street remains same that they mostly fear humans and consider them a threat. That is what this film is looking to elaborate through this quote uttered by a parrot in fear and disgust. Nature and everything in it are witness to the negative impact of humans that is evident in other movies as well (Cahyadi, C. P. 2022).

#### **Traces of Evaluation in the Movie *Rio 2***

*“A shooting star ain't really nothing to see. If you're not here standing next to me.”*

A meteor falling on earth is still is an interesting sight to behold if not the most amazing one. It can be agreed that a shooting star is not the best performance in the circus that nature runs around us to entertain us with her beauty however, many people and communities around the world values this spectacle very highly. Jewel and Blu are singing to celebrate their mutual love and this sentence turns up in lyrics. Both lovers are expressing the other's importance to each by using exaggeration as is often done in romantic poetry. One analogy they use is by refereeing to a shooting star that even the beautiful scene of a shooting star becomes a dull sight when they do not have each other's company. So, a shooting star is described as something that is loved by people so much so that its only loses its charm when one is without a person h loves the most in the world. The sight of a shooting star is magnified out of proportion in this film as millions of people around the world find it attractive. Some of the superstitious ones consider this spectacle of so much importance that they believe it can fulfill their wishes if the wish so at the time of its occurrence.

*“Who is ready for a tropical adventure?”*

Tempting someone into doing something is a skilful art for sure. This art is exploited in this quote where the character of Pedro not only lures other characters but audience of the movie also into thinking about the beauty and exoticism of a jungle hidden away from the eyes of the residents of urban population. Since target audience of English language movies are mostly from Europe and America who are used cold climates in their localities, the word tropical becomes very tempting for them. Who wouldn't want to leave the dark and cold weather of his area and visit the sunny and wild part of the world namely the Amazon for recreation? Monotony of life is killing the life in humans of modern era and even a thought of escaping to some place where can end this monotony is a mouth-watering prospect for them. The word 'adventure' adds to this already tempting invitation by Pedro. So, it's a perfect proposition to get the attention of those are already in search of a recreational activity as an escape. Humans love these kinds adventures in natural surroundings but ecosystems need to be protected by taking measures (Nias, R. C., & Mooney, J. R. 2013).

*“This amazing cockatoo will reveal your future.”*



A street vendor is using a wild bird to make money. This thing doesn't feel so bad on the surface of it as trying to earn your livelihood can not be termed as a negative thing after all but the fact that a bird is held captive to do so, makes it bad somehow. Superstition itself is bad enough to be promoted and using a wild animal to accomplish this makes it even worse. A human is portrayed as an exploiter who has put bird in a cage and harasses it to do the wrong thing also. This exploitation becomes even more heinous when we listen to the tone of the street vendor's words. The scornful behavior feels like of a tyrant who is abusing its subject however he pleases. The same bird character that is antagonist in the film seems an innocent victim of oppression. The scene and the words uttered by the street vendor represent the hostility of humans towards birds and towards nature in general.

*"A toxic frog and a flightless freak."*

There are rare instances in this movie where bad side of wildlife is depicted. This quote represents one such instance. Nature provides shelter, food and many other necessities to human beings but its hostility is strange to no one. Wilderness has both its blessing and troubles. Animals are part of natural circle of life and are essential for intelligent life to flourish but not all the animal benefit the humans in the same way. There are predators that can kill for fun and chop a person like vegetables with their teeth and paws and then there are those silent killers who don't even look like anything remotely dangerous for a life. However, nature has its surprises when it comes to variety it holds. A beautifully colored frog can be more dangerous than a bloodthirsty predator with big teeth and claws. The frog mentioned in this sentence is also a deadly creature though it is interesting to note that it is declared harmless at the end of the story. Nonetheless there are those frogs in the wild that poisonous enough to kill a person in the matter of seconds.

*"I always suspected you were dumber than a monkey."*

Stereotypes are somehow a strange phenomenon. People label certain things and creatures as mentioned by others in the past and there are a number of animal species who have suffered the humiliation because of this notion. Animals are not even near to what humans are capable of in terms of intelligence. So, it can be said that animals are not intelligent or even foolish or dumb but there are levels of that dumbness. There are those animals who don't understand much happening around them and there are others that are intelligent enough to replicate many of human traits. Monkeys are the primates that fall in that latter category, so, logically they should be the last ones to be mocked or made fun of. However, unfortunately this is not how stereotypes are always created. In most of the human societies, monkeys are mocked as dumb and stupid perhaps because they resemble the humans most but very low level of intelligence as compared to humans. This is what that is described in these words by the big boss of illegal loggers. An animal is shown as a lowlife thing and scornful behavior and words are adopted to describe it.

*"What are they doing? Nature freaks"*

People who are concerned about the earth's environment are growing in modern era but same is the case with their critics who are making fun of their worries as if those concerns are myths and fairy tales. Many groups and individuals around the globe are vocal for environmental protection. Some are even sacrificing their careers and much more to protect this planet's natural form. But there are those as well who hate all this thinking it as some rubbish promoted by some media and other sources. Some have the personal interests that force them to being hostile to these environmental activists. A person making millions of dollars a year through coal consumption would never be supportive to climate change activists. There are those who



destroy the jungles just to make timber on large scale and sell it. Everyone has their priorities and interests that can conflict with others. Unfortunately, this is the case with environmental activists that they have stronger enemies than friends. Big corporations and businesses are always trying to get rid of these people by hook or by crook and this does help when even those who have no clash of interest, mock them for their alarm for this planet.

*“Back, you barbarian!”*

The protagonist Blu is depicted as a decent and civilized citizen of America. When Blu ventures through the Amazon’s wildest parts, he comes across other birds that have been living the wild from the day one of their life. Blu calls them as savage barbarians. This is ironic because it is a kind of allusion to the real-life situation between the people living in urban areas and the ones who live in jungles with their ancient tribes. It was Chinua Achebe who perhaps for the first time, pointed finger at those who had confined the definition of word ‘civilized’ to some certain communities. He questioned why people living their lives according to primitive ways were considered savages and uncivilized. According to him, the term civilized is subjective and debatable concept. Local tribesmen living in the jungles might consider people of cities uncivilized from their standpoint, so how can there be a specific society associated to being uncivilized. But this quote reflects another bad stereotype in modern societies that people living in wilderness are necessarily savage or uncivilized. However, this is not the when we take at the violent crimes that are committed daily in so called civilized societies. Nature and those who are close to her are somehow punished for their love for nature and natural ways of life.

*“For years, we have been on the run as the humans push us deeper into the jungle.”*

In recent years when world was hit by Covid-19 pandemic, many extraordinary scenes were observed around the world where forest animals were seen in the streets of big cities. This was unbelievable and remarkable because in this age, wild animals don’t even dare to cross our path or come out of their hideouts in the deep forests. The more human population grows the more these animals are pushed back into wildest areas of jungle where humans don’t roam often enough. This quote in the film is also a reference to this negative trend that is pushing the wildlife to its limits. Outskirts or even those areas that are further ahead are almost empty of many species of animals that are in a large number in that jungle. This is because many of these animals are afraid of coming to the places where humans can be seen often. There are many scary animals around the world but the scariest creatures for these animals are homo-sapiens. Humans have not only scared them away with their presence but have also frightened them so much that these animals run on the sight of a human from even miles of distance. The ecological issues have stemmed from the activities of humans in these jungles (Alfiah, N., & Gultom, E. S. 2020).

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The analysis of *Rio 2* reveals three key facets of ecolinguistic representation, centered on lexical choices, the magnification and evaluation of environmental elements, and their interplay with broader thematic goals. Lexical choices in *Rio 2* heavily emphasize nature and environmental protection, with vocabulary underscoring the safety of ecosystems, animal habitats, and species preservation as core objectives of the creators. Terms denoting natural beauty—such as sunrise, starry nights, expansive green lands, and colorful birds—dominate, keeping audiences immersed in an ecological narrative. While both pleasant and brutal aspects of nature are depicted, positive salience prevails: animals are portrayed as friendly and fun, and features like organic food, minerals, blueberries, scenic vistas, bird life in natural habitats, and adventurous journeys through Amazonian forests are evaluated positively. Conversely,



negative portrayals include deadly creatures (e.g., snakes that can swallow a person, piranhas, toxic frogs), foolish monkeys, barbaric behaviors, deforestation, and illegal logging, with forests sometimes framed as realms of death and killing. Certain species are stereotyped as brainless or evil-genius, and human environmental activists are ironically mocked with negative language despite the film's pro-protection stance. Nouns and noun phrases predominantly describe natural objects, followed by verbs and adjectives, amplifying environmental themes without significant deviation from patterns that exploit nature's appeal for engagement.

These findings align with and extend prior ecolinguistic studies, highlighting *Rio 2*'s role in promoting environmental awareness while revealing manipulative and consumerist underpinnings. Like Ivchenko (2021) on *Zootopia*, *Rio 2* inspires positive attitudes toward nature through persistent preservation motifs, culminating in a resolution against illegal logging. However, echoing Quratul Ain (2021), aspects of nature are commercially exploited for success, with erasure evident in confining environmental threats to logging and deforestation, sidelining broader human culpability (cf. Farooq & Umar, 2021; Malik, 2019). Subjective tilting by creators, as in Mliless (2021), shapes characters, traits, and plots—e.g., ridiculing human activists or glorifying male bird pride and dominance (paralleling Sana, 2020's critique of misleading power in superhero films). The film's war-like jungle climax and focus on habitat restoration mirror Akhiyat (2021) on *Moana*, yet limit discourse to animal-centric balance. Visually and linguistically, *Rio 2* exploits cartoons for awareness, akin to El-Hameed (2015), magnifying glory in jungles while concealing dangers on occasion to overwhelm or enchant audiences. Overall, *Rio 2* magnifies environmental protection, species extinction risks, human roles, and natural harmony, but its lexical and evaluative strategies reveal biased consumerism, gender dynamics, and selective erasure, supporting ecolinguistics' scrutiny of media as ideologically loaded ecological discourse.

## CONCLUSION

This ecolinguistic examination of *Rio 2* illuminates how animated films function as potent vehicles for environmental discourse, leveraging lexical choices to foreground nature's splendor and perils while advancing protectionist agendas. By repeatedly invoking ecological motifs through nouns, verbs, and adjectives, the film immerses viewers in a world where habitat preservation triumphs over threats like illegal logging—yet this narrative is tempered by commercial exploitation, selective erasure of human agency, and subtle biases in gender and character portrayal. Ultimately, *Rio 2* not only raises awareness about deforestation and species conservation but also exemplifies the ideological complexities of media ecolinguistics, urging critical engagement with how such stories shape perceptions of the natural world.

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