

**Reciprocity between Language and Environment: Ecolinguistic Study of
Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines***

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Abstract

This article analyzes the Ecolinguistic study of H. Rider Haggard's King Solomon's Mines, an adventurous novel set in Africa, a search of an unexplored region of Africa by a group of adventurers for the missing brother. It is the narrative of Allan Quatermain, an elephant hunter and explorer and his adventures in the company of Danish man of action Sir Henry Curtis and Royal Navy officer Captain Good. Sir Henry Curtis hires Quatermain to use his knowledge of Africa and his skills as a hunter to lead an expedition in search of Sir Henry's lost brother, George Neville. George vanished while seeking the long-lost diamond mines of King Solomon in an unexplored part of Africa. Being the study of critical discourse analysis, this paper analyzes how the reciprocity between language and ecological phenomena/ environment are narrated in the novel with the focus of key theme of ecolinguistics to take into consideration for the social context including the wider ecological context of species and the physical environment. To accomplish this research, I have used the secondary sources of Ecolinguistics notions propounded by different critics like Alwin Fill, Tzaporah Berman, Peter Mühlhäusler and Edward Sapir as the tools of interpretation.

Key words: *language, interaction, social construct, ecosystem, environmental justice,*

Background of Study

As a recently emerging area of study, ecolinguistics is concerned with the interaction between human beings and nature; how they influence each other (Ali,2019) and it basically studies the relationship of human beings not just with other human beings but also with larger ecological systems that all forms of lives are interrelated to each other. Language is not an object and that can't be used in isolation. At the same time, language as a means of communication does not simply occur by means of sequences of sounds and gestures, but it is a social practice within social life, one uses among others, inseparable from its environment. It is associated with the environment and is highly correlated with ecolinguistics. Language, as a means of social interaction, has an affinity with ecology and it respects and cares about the natural world. In the words of Stanlaw (2020), ecolinguistics is a recent field of linguistics that takes into consideration how language and discourse shape the environment and ecology as well as the physical and social ecological framework in which language acts.

Although the notion of ecolinguistics has been popular and has become productive ways of understanding language and environment, it draws our attention to the ways in which languages are embedded in social, cultural, economic, physical ecologies and operate in complex relations with each other. It studies how these social constraints come to control and manipulate language use so that a sharp link is made between language and environment. Since language is a social construct, it is not an objective system of categorization; rule governed and based on systems of defined rule as Chomskyan linguistics argue; rather it is reflected in social relation; it is ideologically loaded, it reflects how reality is named/framed; how language encodes the stories we live by, and shapes how we see ourselves and our relationship with other animals and the earth (Stibbe,2017). Stibbe regards language as a system of structure and it is manipulated to create discourse, and it is an integral part of the social process. Similarly, it is learnt in the context of social interaction as it has its close affinity with ecological phenomenon.

Theoretical Framework of Study

Ecolinguistics takes language as the element of ecosystem that influences the natural environment. It thus includes a critical study of language and language practice which provides the stimulus for linguists to consider the ecological context and consequences of language. Alwin Fill rightly defines Ecolinguistics thus involves theoretical, methodological and empirical studies of language and offers new perspectives on all these levels for linguists interested in ecology. It can truly be claimed that here is a field of study worth being considered by linguistic talent in search of a challenging task (60). The basic idea as Fill believes that the practices which constitute languages and their environment form an ecolinguistics system, in which languages multiply, breed, vary, influence each other mutually, compete or converge. His definition clarifies that language and social, political, cultural, natural world have close relationships and it is related to the biological ecosystem and surroundings; the social and cultural forces that shape the conditions of speakers and speech communities. The role of literature is that it addresses the crucial aspects of environmental challenges and promoting environmental justice. Therefore, the field of ecolinguistics has developed into a thriving branch of linguistics that is more than ever closer to the pressing issues of our time (Penz and Fill,2022).

It examines the influence of language on the life-sustaining relationships of humans with each other, with other organisms and with the natural environment and investigates the role of language in the development and possible solution of ecological and environmental problems. It is a linguistic analysis applied to ecology. Therefore, it is, in this respect, different from the traditional linguistics which studies how language works; it is about understanding how interaction and environment work. In the words of Ammaria Derni:

The fact that language includes a wide range of concepts, and the fact that it enters almost every aspect of human life, makes the application of linguistic analysis of a broad type. This human means of interaction can be speculated from different standpoints. Ecolinguistics is the study of language according to the environment it is used in. The term emerged in the 1990's as a new paradigm of language study that speculates not only the intra- relations, the inter-relations, and the extra relations of language and environment, but also combinations of these relations. (1).

Thus, the primary aim of ecolinguistics is that human beings cannot live in isolation, and they can only live; survive in interaction with other organisms like ecology, the physical, social, cultural environment etc. It is concerned with the embedding of human beings in the more-than-human world that distinguishes it from other forms of linguistics. Almost all ecolinguists claim that environmental knowledge is often embedded in local languages that are universal relevant to ecological issues.

Ecological Discourse Analysis of the Text

At the beginning of the 20th century, linguists began to take an interest in the connections between language and the environment. The American linguist Edward Sapir, in an article titled "language and environment" showed how languages are influenced by their 'environment'. The very word "eco" is derived from the Greek word "oikos" which means dwelling place and "linguistics" means the scientific study of language. Language is a social practice. Therefore, it has a social structure. It is shaped\ set by society and language influences the society, or it modifies the world view of society. Chomsky focuses on the language structure only. He seems to be ignorant of the discriminatory function of language use. His notion of language is production based on how language is produced. It was in fact the monolithic description of language. Being the part of discourse analysis, ecolinguistics emphasizes that language has hierarchical, symmetrical, conflicting relationship in its level. Social, political, environmental structure is embedded with language which Chomsky ignores. He talks about textual realization, but environmental realization of language is very important; language has an ecological phenomenon. According to Zhang, Li, and Linlin Xie (2023), it promotes the role of language in ecology that helps to explore the ecological ideas implied in ecological discourse. So, it is not simply a new theory in the debate, but a new way of looking at language. To Haggard, language is developed as a powerful tool that supports the narrative elements in the novel. Everyday activities in nature are depicted in such a way that they have been animated with the potential use of language.

Since the evolution of human language, it has been the focus of interest and inquiry for a long time. In the history of modern linguistics, the scientific study of language has gone through many schools and movements. The linguists study the structure of a language system where no other issues language systems are referred to describe. At this level, the structures of a system are identified, described, and explained to include levels like phonology, morphology, and syntax. The linguist's aim is to analyze language with an explicit attention to the linguistic features as they are structured in the system. But they have ignored language as an individual phenomenon and language is a communal property that establishes a correlation between the linguistic system and the social dimension. In this regard, the novel incorporates the reciprocity between language and environment and its portrayal can be realized in the novel. While describing Solomon's Road, the novelist extensively uses his ecological imagination through his characters and settings. Haggard expresses his view as follows:

Here were the dense patches of lofty forest; there a great river wound its silvery way. To the left stretched a vast expanse of rich, undulating veldt, on which we could just make out countless herds of game or cattle, at that distance mountains. To the right the country was more or less mountainous, that is, solitary hills stood up from its level, with stretches of cultivated lands between, among which we could distinctly see groups of dome-shaped huts.

The landscape lay before us like a map, in which rivers flashed like silver snakes, and Alp like peaks crowned with wildly twisted snow wreaths rose in solemn grandeur, while overall was the glad sunlight and wide breath of Nature's happy life (48).

To conceptualize language as part of the living world, Haggard has used a broader outlook and its application of language in the ecological issues that are completely different from how Chomsky has defined it. Instead of conceptualizing language as a separate discourse as an independent entity, he has taken it as an independent part and realize how they have contributed to the world of living. In this respect, language influences life, the world, reality, and ecosystems. At the same time, our social hierarchy explains how social systems come to control and manipulate language use for establishing a harmonious affinity between language and its social context. Tzeporah Berman explains, "Our experiences of the natural world are socially and culturally constructed. Our language plays a significant role in constructing these experiences, our reality and therefore our actions. As such, the way we conceive nature and portray nature through our language has serious implications for our relationship with natural world and with each other"(267). Here, Berman focuses on an integral aspect of social relationships between people through language. Haggard loves depicting the natural environment in our social phenomena and he tries to represent it in terms of integration of nature with human life. He expresses his insights as follows:

"Listen! What is life It is a feather; it is the seed of grass, blown hither and thither, sometimes multiplying itself and dying in the act, sometimes travel in a little way on the road it will. It is well to try and journey one's road and to fight with the air. Man must die. At the worst he can but die a little sooner. I will go with thee across the desert and over the mountains, unless perchance I fall to the ground on the way, my father ".... It is a glowworm that shines in the nighttime and is black in the morning; it is the white breath of the oxen in winter, it is the little shadow that runs across the grass and loses itself at sunset (31).

Here, Haggard virtually connects the reality of human life with natural phenomena which is assumed to be an integrated part. There is only nature as the part of the environment to which all things belong to. All components of the environment like plants, animals, human beings, natural objects are directly related to our daily life. Though there is a hierarchical system of labeling them as superior or inferior, they do have equal interaction and interdependence in our ecology that they are viewed as integral parts and functionally interrelated. Therefore, Haggard has used his metaphorical narration in comparison with non-human things because they are also part of our environment. Language is related to our biological and ecosystem, social and cultural aspects, everyday reality that shapes the conditions of speakers and speech communities. So, it is part of the environment where we live in, and it is to be speculated in accordance with this environment. In this regard, Einar Haugen in his essay entitled "The Ecology of Language" writes that language ecology may be defined as the study of interactions between any given language and its environment. The true environment of a language is the society that uses it as one of its codes. Language exists only in the minds of its users, and it only functions in relating these users to one another and to nature, i.e. their social and natural environment (57).

When the British adventurers including Allan Quatermain, Henry Curtis, Captain John Good and their team went to the expedition to find out long lost diamond mine of King Solomon, they had to overcome many obstacles on the way to their destination. In fact, the aim of their expedition was to search for Sir Henry's lost brother George Neville who vanished while seeking the mine in an unexplored part of Africa. They were able to travel through forests, deserts and mountains, involving themselves in hunting as well as other adventurous activities. One of the features of the language they used during their adventure was that it has its close affinity with ecology. As language enters almost every aspect of human life, many things like water, animals, insects, trees etc. dealing with various aspects of human life that can be used in correspondence with Ecolinguistics study.

On the grass there lay a sable antelope bull- the most beautiful of all the African antelopes- quite dead, and transfixed by its greater curved horns was a magnificent black-maned lion, also dead. What had happened, evidently, was this. The stable antelope had come down to drink at the pool, where the lion- no doubt the same we had heard –had been lying in wait. While the antelope was drinking the lion had sprung upon him, but was received upon the sharp, curved horns and transfixed. I once saw the same thing happen before. The lion, unable to free himself, had torn and beaten at the back and neck of the bull, which maddened with fear and pain, had rushed on till it dropped dead (26).

The expedition team on their journey witnessed an incident of an antelope and the lion which was violent and brutal attack of the lion against the weak antelope. Sir Henry narrated it during action taking place during their journey. Here, the language, as ecolinguists believe in narrated by Sir Henry is not an autonomous faculty but it is rather related to environment. According to Fill & Mühlhäusler, "Though the term 'environment' does not have its modern meaning with respect to Ecolinguistics it was the first uttered endeavor "to establish a relation between 'Nature' and language (2)". When we talk about the environment, it is represented by the landscape of the country and its climate as well as animals, plants and minerals resources of the region. In other words, they can take it as the representation of the physical environment, and they are regarded as the essential aspects of human life. They have a close affinity with human life and language helps to express such elements in a holistic way. Language is here associated with depiction of natural products like animals, trees and water etc. because they are taken as the creation and part of the environment.

Edward Sapir describes that language consists of three things. Language has its subject matter or content in relation to vocabulary, grammatical forms, morphology. Out of these three components, he takes vocabulary as the primary component that clearly expresses the physical and social environment. Therefore, Sapir tries to establish the relationship between language and environment in his famous essay "Language and Environment". Thus, he writes that it is the vocabulary of a language that most clearly reflects the physical and social environment of its speakers. (15). Furthermore, Sapir points out that the degree of clearness of such vocabularies mentioned in the novel clearly indicate the lion, antelope, grass, water that can give us the idea of familiarity of the language users within our environment. In this regard, Haggard has presented the physical environment in the proper use of vocabulary as a part of language. He has mentioned the fabrication of nature with her elements, living agents, that have made the world a harmonious place to live. The novelist writes, " By the stream, basking in the morning sun, stood and lay a group of from ten to fifteen large antelopes at that distance we could not see exactly what they were" (46).

Haggard has beautifully glorified the web of nature and human beings in relation to the language in an implicit way.

The novelist speaks about the interaction of a language with its environment, a reciprocal relation of environment and language. Simply speaking, he explains the interrelations of language and environment within the organisms of physical atmosphere like the morning sun, stream, snow, a patch of green grass etc. Since there has been a dominating approach to language from the ecological point of view, Haggard has concentrated on the role of the language in describing ecological issues. In other words, he focuses on how language affects us about environmental aspects and how the language system itself is a means to address them. In this way, Ecolinguistics has cast a new light on the language in terms of its interrelation with the environment.

Conclusion

This paper has analyzed H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* in the framework of ecological discourse analysis and has tried to study how ecology and language are interacted through discourse analysis. The ecological thoughts of the novelist and his humanistic attitude toward nature, wild animals, jungles are clearly described in this paper. All the creations of nature in the world are equal and they have established their own ecological values to each other, and they have established their own existence themselves. In this novel, Haggard is deeply concerned with the creation of nature, and he has implicitly identified himself as an environmentalist and he has called us for the protection of nature and ecology. In this regard, we can clearly realize his ecological concerns, environmental justice, observations and description of animals and their protections because he claims that human beings are also the significant part of nature and all things in nature are interconnected closely and equally.

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