A Crochet of Nature's Lingua Franca in Sarah de Leeuw's *Skeena*

¹Dr. S.J Kala, ²S. Shivani

¹Associate Professor, ²Research Scholar
¹PG and Research Department of English,
¹Fatima College (Autonomous), Affiliated to Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai, India
¹sjkalaalbert@yahoo.co.in, ²shivaniregi09@gmail.com

Abstract— Ecolinguistics examines how language shapes human perception and interaction with the natural world. The field promotes language that inspire environmental protection and critiques linguistic forms that contribute to ecological destruction. This study applies Arran Stibbe's econarrative theory to Sarah de Leeuw's Skeena. The book-length poem is the voice of the British Columbia's Skeena river heard through archival sources, indigenous oral traditions and personal testimonies. The analysis delves into Stibbe's eight econarrative forms such as ideology, framing, metaphor, evaluation, identity, erasure, salience and narratives as well as into the linguistic patterns that celebrate riparian ecosystems highlighting on the connectivity of language with ecology in Skeena.

Key words— Ecolinguistics, econarrative theory, framing, salience, skeena.

INTRODUCTION

Language functions like ecosystems, with words and dialects involving in a cordial connection within social and physical environments. Flora and Fauna, the biotic components of the ecosystems, depend on each other and their surroundings for survival and growth. Likewise, languages rely on their communities and cultural contexts to thrive and survive. The use of language at both lexical and grammatical levels reflects and responds to changes in society's natural, social and cultural environments. Language shapes how people perceive and interact with the natural world. Language and ecology are interconnected paving way to the creation of the field, Ecolinguistics. Ecolinguistics is the study of how language influences human perception and interaction with the physical world. It analyses the forms of language that contribute to ecological destruction like climate change and loss of biodiversity.

ECOLINGUISTICS

Ecolinguistics promotes new forms of language that inspire people to protect nature and develop sustainable relationships with it. Ecolinguistics emerged from environmental crises which are deeply connected to the stories, metaphors and linguistic patterns that describe the biosphere. Ecolinguist Arran Stibbe states that, ecolinguistics is based on,

> … critiquing forms of language that contribute to ecological destruction, and aiding in the search for new forms of language that inspire people to protect the natural world. This … starts to create connections in people's minds between two areas of life – language and ecology – that are not so separate after all. (1)

The key proponents who shaped the field of ecolinguistics include Alwin Fill and Peter Mühlhäusler who documented its evolution. Contemporary scholars have incorporated from Teun A. van Dijk and Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis frameworks to examine the power relations embedded in environmental discourse. The linguistic approaches pioneered by the linguists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson explore the metaphorical structures which shape the perception of the natural environment. Among these contributions, Arran Stibbe's econarrative theory provides eight frameworks that reveal the importance of language in strengthening the connections between humanity and the natural world.

ECONARRATVE THEORY

Arran Stibbe's econarrative theory provides an ecolinguistic framework that helps in analysing the language which builds human relationships with the natural world through embedded stories or narratives. It operates cognitively to influence perceptions and behaviours. The econarrative theory identifies eight frameworks such as, "… *ideology, framing, metaphor, evaluation, identity, erasure, salience and narratives*" (Fouad 562). Ideology converses through discourses, while framing frames the ecological issues. Metaphors influence the interrelation between humans and ecosystems. Evaluation conveys positive or negative judgments about the ecological entities. Identity constructs how individuals define themselves in relation to the natural world. Erasure occurs when the language omits or marginalises ecological relationships in discourse. Salience determines the environmental elements to receive attention and prominence in communication. Finally, narratives are the storylines that deal with the innate connection between human and nature.

Contemporary poets engage with econarrative frameworks targeting the environmental discourses and by reimagining human-nature relationships in their literary work. Poets such as Alice Oswald employ river-centered narratives that grant voice to non-human entities, while Craig Santos Perez from the Pacific Islands utilises econarrative to critique environmental destruction. Evelyn Reilly's work explores scientific language as a tool for reconceptualising environmental crisis. Canadian poets like Don McKay, Jan Zwicky and Tim Lilburn have contributed to bioregional approaches that foreground ecological embeddedness through their literary works. Among contemporary writers who focus on econarratives, Sarah de Leeuw stands significant for her contribution to ecological consciousness in her literary works.

SARAH DE LEEUW

Sarah de Leeuw is an acclaimed researcher and a creative writer born in 1973. A native of British Columbia, Sarah de Leeuw's literary work bridges marginalised communities with environmental geography in the northern regions, particularly Haida Gwaii and Terrace. She serves as a Research Director of the Health Arts Research Centre and specialises in areas concerning the well-being of the Indigenous people. Her creative writing has garnered significant national recognition, including the National Bronwen Wallace Award for Poetry in 1999 and the prestigious Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize from the BC Book Prizes in 2013. Most recently, her poetry was recognised in CBC Books as the "Best Canadian Poetry" in the year 2022.

Sarah de Leeuw has published a variety of scholarly work spanning poetry and non-fiction. Her *Unmarked: Landscapes Along Highway 16* (2004) is a lyrical prose, mapping environmental stories of Northern British Columbia. Her long poem, *Skeena* (2015) traces British Columbia's Skeena river through the narratives interweaving indigenous oral traditions with colonial archives. The non-fiction *Where it Hurts* (2017) confronts the colonial violence and discusses the crisis of the indigenous people. In 2020, she co-edited *Geopoetics in Practice* with Eric Magrane, Linda Russo and Carol Perez cataloguing environmental justice.

SARAH DE LEEUW'S *SKEENA*

Sarah de Leeuw's *Skeena* is a book-length poem on British Columbia's Skeena River. *Skeena* is based on Sarah de Leeuw's archival sources including historical newspapers, scientific reports, indigenous oral traditions and personal testimonies. Historical references appear through newspaper excerpts that chronicle industrial infrastructure development like the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway bridge completion in 1912, the establishment of the salmon canneries in 1889 and telegraph line construction in the year 1860. Scientific reports provide technical data from Solomon Henson's study on Skeena river's water quality. Harry S. Swarth's ornithological study provides classification of the bird species and their habitats in the river region.

Oral traditions in the poem, *Skeena* include the Gitanmaax story of a chief's daughter who is impregnated by a supernatural being. The chief gets infuriated at this and abandons his pregnant daughter once he discovers her lover to be a supernatural being, incurring curse on the entire land. Eventually, the people residing in the region leave the place and the salmons living in the river too vanish from Skeena. The devastated chief's daughter decides to bring back the salmons by lighting strips of wood and bark along the riverbank and so the place became to be known as Gitanmaax. Sarah de Leeuw weaves these oral histories in the poem by giving voice to the river.

Personal testimonies emerge from the histories of the settler families of Bateman and Froese who established their homesteads along the banks of the northern shore of the Skeena river. These families witnessed the river's devastating floods in the year 1936. The flood submerged the Froese farm and destroyed the Remo ferry. Besides the settler accounts, the poem also incorporates the personal testimony of Ali Howard, a chef in Smithers who swam the entire Skeena river in 2009 to raise awareness on the river's unique ecosystem

OBJECTIVES

Sarah de Leeuw's poem *Skeena* employs the river as both a narrator and as an ecological subject. The research paper adopts Arran Stibbe's econarrative theory, a framework within ecolinguistics that analyses the linguistic patterns embedded in Sarah de Leeuw's poem. The study highlights on how the poem unfolds the eight econarrative forms. The econarrative form like ideology, framing, metaphor, evaluation, identity, erasure, salience and narratives to reveal the linguistic patterns in the poem that shape the representations of industrial development and ecological relationships.

ECONAARRATIVE FORM – IDEOLOGY

Arran Stibbe's first type of econarrative form is ideology. Ideology is described as the belief systems that are shared by a particular group in a society. He states that, "Ideologies are cognitive, that is, they exist in the minds of group members, but they also have a linguistic manifestation in characteristic ways of speaking and writing used by those members" (19).The characteristic forms of language which convey particular ideologies are named as discourses. Discourses are patterns of communication that particular groups in the society like the nature writers and environmentalists use. It expresses their exclusive linguistic features like grammar, vocabulary and visual imagery to represent the natural world. According to the econarrative theory, discourses can be classified as destructive, ambivalent and beneficial discourses.

Destructive discourse displays the ideas that are contrary to ecological wisdom, promoting actions that damage the surrounding and discusses the narration of resource extraction and industrial expansion The poem *Skeena* (2015) unravels destructive discourse through colonial narratives that celebrate industrial development at the expense of the destruction of the river. A newspaper excerpt from *The Western Call* (1912) in the poem exemplifies that, "… the province, as well as the whole Do-/ minion will throb with a new life, and there will/ soon be a long line of villages, towns, cities, set-/ tlements and commercial, industrial, lumbering,/ farming and mining activities brought into existence" (de Leeuw 74). The phrase "throb with a new life" implies the industrial expansion which brings life to the people rather than throwing light on how the existing ecosystems and indigenous communities are destroyed. The catalogue of "commercial, industrial, lumbering, farming and mining activities" is presented as a new creation in the newspaper excerpt from *The Western Call* despite the mining activities involve clearcut logging, mineral extraction and habitat displacement.

Ambivalent discourse creates a positive impact of emphasising on the problems of the nature however, it may be influenced by political or commercial interests. The discourse enables the people to preserve or destroy the ecosystem by acknowledging the concerns of the environment. The poetic language describing the flood management in *Skeena* is an illustration of ambivalent discourse. The technical report in the poem from Floodplain Erosion Hazard Mapping Zymoetz (Copper) River states that, "… What had been considered a 'stable' road location/ for the first 15 years, now seemed to have become a chronic and expensive/ problem demanding long-term solutions" (de Leeuw 58). The ambivalent discourse of the report documented in the poem symbolises the failure of human engineering in controlling the natural systems. The roads and pipelines which were built earlier on floodplains are destroyed by natural flooding. The river's flooding patterns is stated as a 'chronic problem' that requires human 'solutions' rather than questioning about the infrastructure which was established in the flood-prone areas. It reveals that nature must be managed rather than accommodated.

Beneficial discourse refers to the language that nurtures environmental awareness and advocates for the protection of the ecosystem. The discourse stresses on the value of ecosystem and their innate connection with the land. The river Skeena as verified by Leeuw benefits the riparian ecosystems, prevents the land from erosion and protects the wildlife habitat: "*Riparian* / I owe you / beyond / all else" (de Leeuw 39). Skeena also supports different types of salmon like sockeye, steelhead, coho and chum that forms the backbone of the region of Northern Pacific thus supporting both human and wildlife populations. It joins with tributaries like the Wet'sinkwha to distribute water across the Northern British Columbia.

ECONAARRATIVE FORM – FRAME AND FRAMING

Frame and framing, Stibbe's next theoretical framework finds place in various academic disciplines and is known by terms such as schemata, idealised cognitive models and scripts. Frames function as cognitive structures that determine the perception of reality. According to the linguist George Lakoff, frames are "… mental structures that shape how we see the world. As a result, they shape the goals we seek, the plans we make, the way we act, and what counts as a good or bad outcome of our actions" (xi). Frames perform as mental structures that facilitate comprehension and structure information. For instance, when an individual encounters the word 'river', it activates a frame which denotes the water, flow, banks and ecosystem.

Skeena, the poem establishes a frame that positions the river as a living entity with memory and sensory experiences rather than a natural resource. The poet describes the river's physical contact with its natural habitat and the river is considered as an active object. The first-person narration as "I am the river" personalises the consciousness of the river Skeena. The river is describing its physical contact with the sandbars, "I have touched / bends of sandbars" (de Leeuw 11) where the sandbars are deposits of sand that accumulate in river bends. In the poem, the frame of the river invites the readers to perceive the Skeena not through the frame of natural resource or as a waterway but through a frame of sentient being engaging with humans and employing sensory experience. Humans view rivers as inanimate water flowing passively through the landscapes. In the poem, the river presents itself as an active subject experiencing and shaping its environment. It positions the sandbars not as obstacles but as elements of the river's own embodied existence.

Framing is the active process of invoking a particular frame in discourse. It occurs through the strategic use of, "… trigger words that convey a specific source frame to mind" (Baig et al. 4065). The lines in the poem, "I heave against your downward heft / you're drilled bored / below the mud slick" (p. 37) offer the river's perspective of the construction of the bridge. The trigger words like "drilled", "bored" and "heft" in the poem depict the construction of the bridge as an act of violation. These trigger words draw the readers' attention to the manual work and industrial processes. By incorporating the words of heavy machinery and construction sites, the poet illustrates the ecological damage to the readers who can relate to the forceful, invasive nature of industrial work and the violence inflicted upon the natural environment.

ECONAARRATIVE FORM – METAPHOR

Building on discourse types and framing patterns, Stibbe's framework examines the metaphorical structures in the language. Metaphors in the econarrative theory serve as a powerful linguistic tool that outline how an individual perceives and defines their natural environment. The journalist Frans C. Verhagen points out that,

> … one of the major functions of the new science of ecolinguistics is to contribute to the unmasking of myths, assumptions, and ideologies that underlie …notions of Nature … It is particularly in the linguistic device of metaphor that these assumptions are communicated. (1)

Earlier, the environmentalists in the literary work incorporated metaphors such as 'Nature as scala naturae' and 'Nature as machine'. Brendon Larson, an environmental scientist in his book ***Metaphors for Environmental Sustainability: Redefining Our Relationship with Nature*** argues the metaphor of nature as a competition. Nevertheless, the ecological worldview emphasises on different metaphorical constructions that throw light on interconnection, harmony and respect for natural systems with metaphors like 'Nature as mother', 'Nature as web' and 'Nature as measure'.

Sarah de Leeuw's ***Skeena*** rejects the mechanistic metaphors and reimagines the cordial relationship with river through a varied metaphorical language. The poem stresses on kinship metaphors with the river addressing tributaries as a living being with human characteristics and emotions. The four tributary rivers, Zymagotitz, Exstew, Kasiks, Exchamsiks are considered as Skeena's own family members. They are characterised as siblings flowing from the motherland and acting as an emotional anchor for its tributary. Sarah de Leeuw states that the river functions as a living body metaphor throughout the poem, *Skeena*. It also serves as a digestive system by positioning itself as organs that process nutrients and nurture the life: "Invertebrates nuzzling my bowels" (de Leeuw 49) and "larva in my belly" (de Leeuw 34).

Leeuw points out how in the poem ***Skeena,*** the river works as a circulatory system in the description of swimmer Ali, where, "Your skin membrane a watery system veins like tributaries thin splinters and blue sparks. I brush up against the estuary of your heart" (de Leeuw 80). The tributaries are considered as veins which supply essential nutrients throughout the watershed. Metaphors emerge when the river asserts "I suckbackgasp (splooshthluck)" (de Leeuw 65) in response to the drowning moose. The moose generates involuntary breathing responses inside the water. The river Skeena uses its physical force to resist infrastructure development as "I heave against your downward heft" (de Leeuw 37) as it supports the bridges and dams through its natural strength. The body metaphors construct the river as a living organism with digestive, respiratory, circulatory and muscular systems and encourage the readers to understand environmental protection and safeguard the nature.

ECONAARRATIVE FORM – EVALUATION

The ideology of the evaluations of nature and ecological issues in econarratives function through the patterns of appraisal. Appraisal patterns express positive and negative judgments, exhibit emotional reactions of excitement or disgust and offer praise or condemnation in a particular text. Renowned linguists, J.R Martin and David Rose refer to this phenomenon as prosodic patterns of appraisal choices or as an appraisal pattern: "Appraisal is concerned with evaluation – the kinds of attitudes that are negotiated in a text, the strength of the feelings involved and the ways in which values are sourced and readers aligned" (63). Multiple linguistic components can generate positive or negative evaluations of life experiences which J.R Martin and Peter White classify under the terminology as appraisal items.

There are explicit appraisal terms like good and right and implicit expressions such as fresh, natural or smart which have positive or negative connotations. Words that are marked morphologically with prefixes like 'un', 'in' or 'dis' to the appraising

items create words like 'unhappy', 'inconsiderate' or 'disillusioned'. Marked expressions like the word unhappy are negative while the unmarked expressions like the word happy carry positive connotations. The most powerful positive appraisal pattern emerges in *Skeena* through the inhabitation of the Gitselasu people: "… abundant, fertile rivers and lands in the beautiful valley of the Skeena/ since 'time immemorial'. They continue to work and live in this rich landscape/ and have a very proud heritage" (de Leeuw 71). The positive sounding terms such as abundant, fertile, beautiful, rich and proud signify positive connotations and make the readers feel good while reading or hearing the lines from the poem.

The negative connotations highlight the tension between human development and natural systems. The negative appraisal terms in *Skeena* symbolise ecological resistance and natural power. While negative words like "uncontainable", "unyielding, "unglued" and "unzipped" convey the message positively within the poem's ecological framework. The river's "uncontainable" nature and "unyielding" presence represents strength and persistence, while the human infrastructure becomes "unglued" and "unzipped". This demonstrates the river's capacity to reclaim space from human interventions. The poem also chronicles the ecological loss as "disappeared", "vanished" or been "destroyed" by acknowledging that destruction and renewal are part of natural cycles.

ECONAARRATIVE FORM – IDENTITY

Language framing shapes the perception of the environment whereas the construction of identities in a discourse plays a major role in promoting ecological values. Crompton and Kasser states that, "… 'studies of environmental identity and connectedness with nature have indeed established that connectedness is strongly correlated with environmental attitudes and behaviours" (12). Identity performs on three levels. The basic level lies on the personal identity which centers on the individual and their unique characteristics. The intermediate level encompasses the collective identity, where individuals are treated as members of social communities and groups.

The last level of identity is ecocultural identity which embraces living species and the non-living environment. In Sarah de Leeuw's *Skeena,* these three identity levels manifest distinctly and intersect throughout the poem. At the personal identity level, an individual emerges with specific experiences similar to that of Ali Howard, the swimmer's whose bodily relationship with the river is portrayed through the lines, "Stroke. Current. Current stroke. / Muscle. Thin film of flesh" (de Leeuw 80). These lines establish Ali Howard as a singular human agent engaging with the ecosystem.

The collective identity level appears through references to distinct social groups especially the Gitselasu people of Kitselas Canyon, the railway workers, cannery labourers and settler communities like the Bateman and Froese. Each group possesses cultural histories and have ties with the river that distinguish them from one another. The poem works at the ecocultural identity level by giving voice to the river. The river lives along with the organisms including moose, salmon, ravens, cedars and tributaries as active participants.

ECONAARRATIVE FORM – ERASURE

Erasure is yet another form in Stibbe's econarrative theory where crucial elements of ecological reality such as, " … the language which is used to erase nature through the systemic absence, backgrounding, or distortion of plants, animals, rivers, forests, and the physical environment" (Ma and Stibbe 171). Stibbe explains three types of erasure which denote the void, the mask and the trace. Void, the first type of erasure signifies the complete elimination in which the ecological relationship with a literary work disappears from the discourse. In the poem *Skeena,* the discourse of the road exemplifies the void by erasing the primitive knowledge and sustainable relationship with the river system.

The sign reduces the cedar-based engineering to primitive technology while framing the existence of the indigenous people before the arrival of non-Indians. Sarah de Leeuw highlights the void type of erasure in the lines:

> From a road sign near old Hazelton/ Hagwilget: The home of the quiet people was a carrier Indian village on the/ banks below. Here a bridge spanned the Bulkey River before the non-Indians/ arrived. Poles, lashed with cedar "rope" were supporting timbers for this noted/ 'marvel of primitive engineering.' Later, reinforced with wire by the crews of/ the telegraph line, it served for half a century. (de Leeuw 15)

This creates a void eliminating the relationships of the indigenous with the land. The Carrier people's understanding of seasonal flood, the relationship with the Bulkey river and the awareness of salmon migration patterns disappear entirely from the narrative replacing them with a timeline where real engineering begins with the European telegraph crews.

The trace represents the second type of erasure and is characterised by the presence of the important elements that appear in an attenuated or abstract manner. Trace can be seen in the poem when the river states, "Women packed side by side by side slicing salmon slick in blood / boots sloshing in sleet rain and salmon guts. / Freezing hands shoving flanks / of salted sockeye into tins" (p. 24). The identities of the women cannery workers mentioned in the discourse remain vague and generalised. They are described without any individual names, personal histories or specific ethnic backgrounds. The women exist as traces and are visible through their physical actions of slicing, sloshing and shoving. The narrative marginalises the women, reducing them to anonymous labourers who work in salmon canneries.

Mask occurs when the significant elements appear in language as distorted representations concealing the true nature. David Herman points out that mask happens when, "… the specificity of the experiences of non-human animals is emptied out and replaced with experiences imported from the human domain" (101). The mask is mentioned through the lines, "The first cannery/ in northern British Columbia, it took advantage of the abundant sockeye runs/ up the Skeena River to challenge the dominance of the canneries along the/ lower Fraser" (p. 27). The language masks the nature of salmon populations and their importance to indigenous communities. The phrase "took advantage of" highlights the business strategy made by the industrialists rather than the destruction of living creatures and disruption of ecosystem. This distortion legitimises industrial extraction by hiding the violence against the living beings. The mask operates by removing salmon's ecological relationships from the discourse and replacing these elements with a utilitarian representation.

ECONAARRATIVE FORM – SALIENCE

Erasure creates absences in environmental discourse while salience highlights the econarrative elements that are actively foregrounded and consider to be prominent. The concept of salience serves as the counterpart to erasure. Arran Stibbe defines salience as a story that is portrayed in the minds of people which depicts an area of life that is considered to be prominent and

seeks primary attention. Salience patterns are language devices is utilised through concrete, specific and vivid descriptions, where Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, prominent figures in the discourse analysis, posit as, "…. degree to which an element draws attention to itself due to its size, its place in the foreground or its overlapping of other elements, its colour, tonal values, its sharpness of definition and other features" (10). Salience reinforces sustainability and conservation of the natural environment. A range of linguistic features comprising abstraction and transitivity reveal the salience pattern which exhibit vivid and concrete representations.

Abstraction functions as a lexical strategy where the discourse employs specific lexical terms which results in shifting the attention from concrete to the abstract depictions (Fowler, 1991). This technique is termed as generalisation or homogenisation. In *Skeena*, Sarah de Leeuw employs abstraction to specify the ecological degradation. The lines in the poem, "Our new grasses / our greenery / gone" (de Leeuw 43) demonstrate how the poem uses generalised terms like grasses and greenery are used rather than mentioning the specific plant species that are affected by flooding and industrial development. The readers cannot determine whether the botanical loss includes native sedges, riparian willows or specific flowering plants.

The salience pattern of transitivity, according to Stibbe, is a linguistic system that identifies whether the living entities appear as active agents who perform actions. Transitivity offers a, "… a network of interrelated options for representing different types of experience – our experience of the material world, of the world of our inner consciousness, of the world of symbolization, and so on" (Matthiessen 15). In the poem *Skeena*, Sarah de Leeuw engages in transitivity through the poetic lines, "a chickadee dee dee dee/ beak full of brittle high-bush cranberries/ tiny bursts bitter winter dried and frozen sugar" (de Leeuw 35). The poet talks about chickadee's actions by capturing its behaviour and focussing on the minute details of its beak. The chickadee is depicted as an active agent of its own existence. The bird fills its beak with cranberries. The transitivity pattern builds a reality where the chickadee is presented as a subject with its own goals and actions within the ecosystem.

ECONAARRATIVE FORM – NARRATIVE

Narratives are structured sequences of events that shape how people understand and interpret reality. According to Stibbe, econarratives are stories that relate to ecological relationships and environmental issues. Stibbe posits three fundamental attributes that define the function of the econarratives. He defines econarratives as narratives that "… describe, construe or construct a version of reality which is not necessarily false" (32). It reveals underlying beliefs about the relationship between humans and the natural world. The version of reality exhibits through the portrayal of human-river relationship.

The poet presents Ali Howard's swimming down the Skeena river as an econarrative that portrays an interconnected relationship between humans and river. The narrative captures the realistic experience of the character Ali Howard's struggle while swimming across the Skeena river: "Like a young/ porpoise but where do you go/ after dark? Leave me dripping/ on to the land and out of touch" (de Leeuw 80). Ali's swimming style resembles a porpoise's especially when she glides gracefully in the moving water. She leaves the river each evening, stays on the land overnight and resumes swimming the next day. Ali's swimming story constructs a reality where physical immersion fosters ecological awareness through direct bodily connection with the ecosystem.

Stibbe's econarratives contain a sequence of events that unfold in a specific time and are set in a particular location. In *Skeena*, the Gitanmaax story follows a clear temporal sequence of events. The story develops a structured sequence beginning with the chief's daughter's forbidden relationship with a supernatural creature, moving then to the chief's abandonment of his daughter. This incident triggers a curse that results in both human displacement and ecological devastation with the fleeing of the people flee and vanishing of the salmons from Skeena respectively. Finally, the story end where the chief's daughter gives birth to three sons and her supernatural lover instructs her to "Light the strips light the strips light / and line them up along the river's banks" (p. 32) to summon the salmons back. The curse causes ecological disruption and the lighting of bark strips reverses the damage by restoring the salmons. The sequence is anchored in a specific time especially during the winter. The event takes place at Gitanmaax which is situated between the Skeena and Bulkley rivers.

SUMMING UP

Sarah de Leeuw's *Skeena* delivers how language and communication amplify the voice of nature through literary expressions. Through the exploration of Arran Stibbe's econarrative theory, the poem reveals that the destructive language pattern exposes colonial industrial narratives, the beneficial representation celebrates riparian ecosystems and the ambivalent construction in the poem expresses the tensions between human development and natural systems. The poem's use of framing, metaphor, identity and evaluation further demonstrates the connectivity of language with ecological consciousness. The linguistic patterns of salience and erasure discover how the narrative unveils the indigenous knowledge and sustainable relationships with the land. The poem *Skeena,* thus stands as a testament to ecolinguistics by connecting language with ecology.

REFERENCES

[1] I. A Baig, T. Naeem, and A. Zafar, "A study of sultan bahu's poetry through arran stibbe's eco linguistic framework," *Pakistan Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences,* vol.1, pp. 4046–4054, December 2023.

[2] T. Crompton, and T. Kasser. Meeting Environmental Challenges: The Role of Human Identity. Godalming: WWF-UK, 2009.

[3] S. De Leeuw, Skeena**.** Canada: Caitlin Press, 2015.

[4] R. Fowler, Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press. London: Routledge, 1991.

[5] F. Fouad, "Salience and erasure techniques in selected egyptian newspaper articles covering the swine flu: an ecolingusitc analysis," *Occasional Papers,* vol.68, pp. 559-578, October 2019.

[6] D. Herman, "Towards a zoonarratology: storytelling and species difference in animal comics," Narrative, Interrupted: The Plotless, The Disturbing and The Trivial in Literature, M. Lehtimäki, L. Karttunen, and M. Mäkelä, Eds. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012, pp. 93–121.

[7] G. Kress, and T. van Leeuwen, Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design. 2nd ed.,: London: Routledge, 2006.

[8] G. Lakoff, Don't Think of an Elephant!: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate: The Essential Guide for Progressives. United States: White River Junction, 2014.

[9] C. Ma, and A. Stibbe, "The Search for New Stories to Live By: A Summary of Ten Ecolinguistics Lectures Delivered by Arran Stibbe," Journal of World Languages, vol. 8, pp.164–187, March 2022.

[10] J. Martin and D. Rose, Working with Discourse: Meaning Beyond the Clause. London: Bloomsbury, 2007.

[11] C.M.I.M. Matthiessen and M.A.K. Halliday, Systemic Functional Grammar: A First Step into the Theory. Sydney: Macquarie University, 1997.

[12] A. Stibbe, Ecolinguistics: Language, Ecology and the Stories We Live By. London: Routledge, 2015.

[13] A. Stibbe, Econarrative: Ethics, Ecology, and the Search for New Narratives to Live By. London: Bloomsbury, 2024.

[14] F. Verhagen, "Worldviews and metaphors in the human-nature relationship: an ecolinguistic exploration through the ages," Language & Ecology, vol. 2, pp. 1-15.