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"Thoughtless Dog Owners, We're Watching You!": An Eco-Critical Discourse Analysis of Discourses of Responsibility in the Keep Britain Tidy Campaign

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ABSTRACT

Litter and plastic pollution is a highly-problematic issue because it has a detrimental impact on animals, humans, nature and the environment (see DiGregorio, 2009; Townsend & Barker, 2014; Wyles *et al*., 2016; Schlanger, 2019; Velis & Cooke, 2020 for instance). In recent years, several studies have examined the role, properties and effectiveness of environmental campaign discourses (i.e. Packwood Freeman, 2013; Rootes, 2013; Kim-Kimchi & Manosevitch, 2015; Poole 2016; Gulliver *et al*., 2020), but few have considered environmental campaign discourses concerning litter and plastic pollution (although see Latinopoulos *et al*., 2018; Ram Lee *et al*., 2018). Meanwhile, the existing literature surrounding discourses of responsibility has primarily focused on the erasure and marginalisation of animals, the environment and nature (i.e. Chawla, 1991; Goatly, 2002; Stibbe, 2019), rather than the absence of corporate responsibility towards environmental issues (although see Kahn, 1992; Alexander, 2013; Gammelgaard Ballantyne *et al*., 2021).

Combining Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (Van Dijk, 2008a; 2017) with Stibbe's the stories-we-live-by framework for ecolinguistics (Stibbe, 2015; 2020), this research provides a critical analysis of a series of environmental campaign posters concerning litter and plastic pollution that were published or endorsed by Keep Britain Tidy between 1971 and 1981 or 2011 and 2021. It considers how the stories-we-live-by relating to the responsibility of litter and plastic pollution are revealed by framings, metaphors, evaluations and identities as well as whether discourses of responsibility have evolved over time. It also highlights the benefits of combining Critical Discourse Analysis with ecolinguistics in order to reveal new stories that not only preserve the environment, but also physical and mental health and wellbeing.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BPII = The Blue Planet II

CDA = Critical Discourse Analysis

CSR = Corporate social responsibility

ECD = Environmental campaign discourses

EOs = Environmental advocacy groups

KBT = Keep Britain Tidy

MCDA = Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis

OCCs = Online communication campaigns

PEA = Political Economic Analysis

PDA = Positive Discourse Analysis

SCA = The Socio-Cognitive Approach

SFL = Systematic Functional Linguistics

WHO = World Health Organisation

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

"Saving our planet is now a communications challenge"

Sir David Attenborough, September 2020

In 2017, the BBC commissioned the production of a seven-part sequel to the 2001 documentary series, *The Blue Planet*. Throughout *The Blue Planet II* (henceforth BPII), viewers witnessed heart-breaking footage of marine animals chocking on beach litter and plastic waste, and were inundated by shocking statistics highlighting the devastating impact that litter and plastic pollution is having on coastal and marine ecosystems. In its aftermath, Hunt (2017) believed that BPII marked a turning point in the public's attitude and behaviour towards litter and plastic pollution, for which they referred to as "The Blue Planet Effect".

However, the producers of BPII predominantly portrayed litter and plastic pollution as an individual or collective responsibility. For instance, during the fourth episode (Big Blue, 2017) of BPII, Attenborough predicted that:

> Unless the flow of plastics into the world's oceans is reduced, marine life will be poisoned by them for many centuries to come.

Whilst Attenborough did not *explicitly* claim that tackling litter and plastic pollution was an individual and collective responsibility, he failed to define the role of businesses, politicians, advertisers and journalists (i.e. corporations) in the fight against litter and plastic pollution. There were also no personal pronouns, suggesting that Attenborough was relying on viewers to take control of the situation themselves.

Later on, Attenborough explained how marine animals were being destroyed because of "What we are doing to their world". The use of the inclusive pronoun, "we", informed viewers that they were collectively responsible for litter and plastic pollution – perhaps due to their consumer habits or because they were not lobbying the government to take appropriate action.

The belief that individuals are solely or collectively responsible for litter and plastic pollution is unjustified when one considers that corporations have the power, money and specialist knowledge that is required to tackle this issue. However, the producers of BPII are not the

only organisation to assign the responsibility of litter and plastic pollution to individuals or a particular group; Stibbe (2020: 143) described how environmental campaign groups often emphasise the importance of individual actions, such as turning off lights, that, in reality, have little environmental impact, rather than hold corporations accountable for the environmental damage that their products, services, legislation or journalism cause.

In recent years, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) – which encompasses the belief that organisations should adopt business practices and values that are moral, ethical, sustainable and charitable to employees, stakeholders and society (Lee & Kotler, 2013) - has become more commonplace, although this can divert the public's attention away from other issues. For instance, in 2018, the UK Government published a 25-Year Environmental Plan, which proposed a long-term commitment to tackle litter and plastic pollution, but Chilcott (2020) argued that this may have been developed to try and steer the public away from Brexit negotiations, rather than because the government genuinely cared about litter and plastic pollution. Furthermore, examples of corporate social responsibility in environmental campaign discourses remain relatively rare.

In a previous research project, I examined the discursive strategies (i.e. patterns of language) of print advertisements that were designed to encourage consumers to reduce their single-use plastic consumption (Myhill, 2020). Whilst this research clearly tackled a highly-topical issue, its focus was rather broad and it failed to deconstruct discourses of responsibility. Since then, the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has had an adverse impact on everyday life, but also on the progress towards tackling litter and plastic pollution, from the introduction of laws which require face coverings to be worn by individuals in public, indoor spaces, to twice-weekly lateral flow testing, to the rise in consumer demand for online shopping and takeaway services during lockdown. Of course, the public cannot be blamed - nor criticised - for engaging in such behaviours and practices during these unprecedented times, but it just goes to show that linguistic research investigating environmental campaign discourses surrounding litter and plastic pollution is even more timely now that it was two years ago, when the previous project was conducted.

1.2 Research Questions

The aim of this research is to explore how discourses of responsibility (individual, collective or corporate) are socially-constructed in environmental campaign posters regarding litter and plastic pollution. The Oxford Learner's Dictionaries (2021) define responsibility as:

(Noun) A duty to deal with or take care of someone or something, so that it is your fault if something goes wrong.

Throughout this thesis, the word responsibility is used to reflect the view that somebody, somewhere (whether that be a particular individual, social group or corporation) is liable or to blame for litter and plastic pollution. In other words, they have a duty to do whatever they can to tackle this issue and/ or it is their fault that litter and plastic pollution continues to damage the environment. In order to fulfil the aim of this research, the following research questions (R.Q.s) have been designed:

> **R.Q.1.** How are discourses of responsibility socially-constructed in environmental campaign posters concerning litter and plastic pollution?

In order to answer this question, this research will examine how the stories-we-live-by concerning the responsibility of litter and plastic pollution (i.e. who is responsible, what their responsibility is) are revealed in a collection of environmental campaign posters that were produced or endorsed by Keep Britain Tidy. The *stories-we-live-by* are "stories in the minds of multiple individuals across a culture" that influence how people think about and behave in society (Stibbe, 2020: 6). Stories can be *beneficial* by promoting ecologically-responsible behaviours and practices and celebrating environmental justice and stewardship, *destructive* by perpetuating behaviours, practices and identities that are ecologically-destructive or *ambivalent* where it is unclear whether the story is beneficial, destructive or a combination of both (Stibbe, 2020: 3). Stibbe's ecolinguistic framework (which is fully introduced in Chapter 3 of the thesis) outlines the nine ways in which stories about the way that we as individual human beings and as members of society live in the world can be revealed by the linguistic analysis of *ideologies*, *framings*, *metaphors*, *evaluations*, *convictions*, *identities*, *erasure*, *salience* and *narratives*, and how these stories can either obstruct or transform humanity's relationship with animals and the natural environment (Stibbe, 2020).

> **R.Q. 2.** Who is responsible for litter and plastic pollution in the posters?

In order to answer to this question, this research will use the findings of the textual analysis to try and establish *who* is being held liable and/ or to blame for litter and plastic pollution in each of the posters/ data sets, focusing specifically on discourses of individual, collective and corporate responsibility. The word *responsibility* is synonymous with environmental and ethical issues, although its origins can be traced back to the work of thirteenth century moral philosopher, Immanuel Kant, who believed that humans had a duty or moral obligation to

perform certain acts, not out of personal interest, but because they are of significant benefit to wider society (Kant, 2002 trans. Pluhar). For instance, Kant would argue that a person should donate an abandoned £10 note to charity, rather than spend it on themselves, because this would benefit a greater number of people.

R.Q. 3. Have discourses of responsibility evolved over time?

In order to answer this question, this research will comparatively analyse posters from two, alternative time periods: 1971-1981 and 2011-2021, in order to ascertain how discourses of responsibility have evolved over time. The fourth chapter of this thesis will provide a detailed account of *why* these time frames have been selected.

R.Q. 4. How can ecolinguistics/ Eco-Critical Discourse Analysis reveal new-stories-to-live-by?

This is a question that ecolinguists and critical discourse analysts (see Kahn, 1992; Stamou & Paraskevopoulos, 2004; Stibbe, 2004; Alexander, 2013; Stibbe, 2015; Poole, 2016; Stibbe, 2020 for instance) have attempted to answer on multiple occasions. However, this particular analysis will explore how ecolinguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis can be combined to reveal stories that not only preserve animals the natural environment, but also physical and mental health and wellbeing. It will also investigate how these analytical and theoretical frameworks can be used to achieve social equity and justice for animals, the environment, humans and nature.

1.3 Why is Litter and Plastic Pollution So Problematic?

Before I go any further, it is important to highlight *why* litter and plastic pollution is so problematic and therefore why this research is so timely and important in the first place.

There are more than 5 trillion pieces of plastic in the ocean, collectively weighing around 250,000 tons (Erickson *et al*., 2014) and scientists estimate that there will be more than 1.3 billion tons of plastic waste in landfill, rivers, oceans and other bodies of water by 2040, if plastic production continues at the current rate (Velis & Cooke, 2020).Litter and plastic pollution is also problematic because it has a detrimental impact on animals and wildlife; for instance, Townsend and Barker (2014) monitored 104 nestlings in 106 nests across an urban and agricultural landscape in the Sacramento Valley, California and discovered that 85.2% of crows nests contained plastic-like materials whilst 5.6% of nestlings were physically trapped in their nests by plastic waste. In the same year, a food choice experiment found that ants and

other types of insect suffer from chronic exposure to plastic pollutants, such as lipophilic molecules, and exposure to plastic particles in the atmosphere (Culliver-Hot *et al*., 2014). This clearly demonstrates that litter and plastic pollution can harm even the smallest of creatures.

However, one of the greatest problems with plastic is that it can take up to 2,000 years to biodegrade (DiGregorio, 2009) and as it biodegrades, plastic breaks down into tiny nanoparticles which are released into the atmosphere and assimilated in the food that we eat, the air that we breath and the water that we drink (Schlanger, 2019). These nanoparticles produce harmful toxins that are known to cause human health problems (Just One Ocean, 2020). For instance, phthalates can cause child development problems, reproductive disorders and cancer because they are suspected endocrine disrupters, meaning that they interrupt the body's hormonal system (Schlanger, 2019).

During the manufacturing process, CO_2 emissions are released into the atmosphere. In fact, petrochemical companies often use excess fuel to manufacture plastic because the infrastructure that is required to extract fuel in order to manufacture plastic is already up and running, meaning that producing plastic is relatively cheap, straightforward and waste-free (Schlanger, 2019). However, according to the European Commission (2019), plastic production accounts for approximately 3.8% of CO_2 emissions, which is roughly the same amount of pollution that the aviation industry produces (Schlanger, 2019). Moreover, everyday items, such as plastic bottles and nylon often contain phthalates, which are effectively synthetic contaminants that get released into the environment by plastic waste (Cuvillier-Hot *et al*., 2014). Phthalates absorb atmospheric particles and destroy ecosystems.

Litter and plastic pollution can also have a negative impact on people's mental health and wellbeing. A study found that students felt happier, calmer and closer to nature when looking at images of a clean and tidy beach that is completely free of litter, but felt unhappy, less calm and stressed when looking at images of a littered beach (Wyles *et al*., 2016).

Despite the above, Parker (2020a) believes that the effects of litter and plastic pollution *are reversable* and that it is not too late to tackle this issue. However, if the problem escalates, then it will continue to destroy the planet's ecosystems, contribute to climate change and negatively impact humans, animals and the environment - particularly in more marginalised communities where recycling rates may be low or non-existent (Parker, 2020b). Therefore,

litter and plastic pollution is not just an environmental issue, but also an environmental justice issue.

1.4 The Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is organised into six chapters. Following this introductory chapter is a critical review of the existing literature regarding environmental campaign discourses and discourses of responsibility. This chapter will identify and synthesise the existing literature whilst highlighting the key themes, knowledge gaps and limitations of the existing research that motivated this research project.

Chapter 3 will introduce the analytical and theoretical frameworks that are used to critique the data sets: Critical Discourse Analysis and ecolinguistics. It will examine the various approaches and frameworks for Critical Discourse Analysis and ecolinguistics, before introducing the approach that this research takes alongside the ecosophies that have inspired the development of this thesis. In Chapter 4, the data collection process will be described and the data analysis approach explained, followed by a brief overview of some of the main stories that feature in the analysis. It will also discuss the ethical considerations for this research.

Chapter 5 will provide a critical analysis of the data sets introduced in Chapter 4, according to the analytical and theoretical frameworks, ecosophy and research aims and questions. Finally, Chapter 6 will summarise the overall findings of this research and propose a series of recommendations for future research projects in the field.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The first half of this chapter will identify and synthesise a wide range of existing literature regarding the role, properties and impact of *environmental campaign discourses* (henceforth ECDs), such as public information films, advertisements, social media posts, leaflets and posters. The simplest way of defining *discourse* is by differentiating between what Gee (1990) calls big "D" and little "d" discourses, whereby big "D" discourses are the cultural, linguistic and social practices that a particular social group engages in or are governed by and little "d" discourses are the linguistic features (i.e. grammatical, lexical, semantic and semiotic features) of a text (Gee, 1990). This research applies Gee's (1990) understanding of big "D" and little "d" discourses, meaning that the study of ECDs involves the analysis of the linguistic features that are used by campaign groups in order to shape public attitudes and behaviour towards environmental issues. The second half of this chapter will locate and critique the existing literature surrounding *discourses of responsibility*. Throughout the chapter, the key themes, issues, research gaps and limitations of the existing literature will be highlighted.

2.2 Environmental Campaign Discourses

There is increasing evidence to suggest that the public's awareness of environmental issues has improved since the beginning of the twenty-first century (see Fletcher *et al*., 2009, Wong, 2010; Kumar Limbu, 2015; Saikia, 2017; Born, 2019; Rousseau & Deschacht, 2020 for instance). Arguably, this is partly because ECDs educate individuals about the ecological challenges that society faces (Grodzińska-Jurczak *et al*., 2006). However, Packwood Freeman (2010: 256) claimed that the environmental impact of meat has historically been excluded from ECDs. In light of this, he conducted a Foucauldian discourse analysis of 15 US environmental advocacy organisation (henceforth EO) websites which revealed that whilst EOs encourage consumers to adopt a plant-based diet and food producers to develop plant-based alternatives to meat, food producers do not disclose the environmental impact of factory farming in the marketisation of meat and instead label plant-based alternatives as "choices" or "preferences", which discourages consumers from buying plant-based produce (Packwood Freeman, 2010).

Whilst the finding of this analysis communicate that environmental advocacy groups can provide a beneficial contribution to the search for new stories-to-live-by that are more equitable and sustainable because they increase salience towards ecologically-destructive behaviours, such eating meat, there are socio-economic factors to consider. For instance, rural farmers that are already struggling to make a profit are likely to be against the idea of labelling ecologically-destructive practices in the marketisation of meat. Moreover, many rural farmers are already doing whatever they to reduce the carbon footprint of meat as much as possible and improve animal welfare (NFU Cymru, 2020). Therefore, whilst the labelling of ecologically-destructive practices in the marketisation of meat might, hypothetically, seem like a good idea, in order to protect rural farming communities - which generally strive to preserve traditional and more environmentally-conscious farming practices as much as possible (NFU Cymru, 2020) - this would need to be carefully implemented.

A study into the efficacy of local campaigns against three, environmental issues (road building, waste incineration and airport expansion) investigated the role of non-local actors, including celebrities and non-governmental organisations, in ECDs and found that non-local actors can increase salience towards local environmental campaigns (Rootes, 2013). Moreover, the unsuccessfulness of local environmental campaigns is often because the final decision on whether or not to approve a planning proposal is traditionally made by a non-local actor, such as the government or a district council (Rootes, 2013).

Clearly, the idea that local environmental campaigns are more successful when endorsed by a non-local actor makes sense. For instance, in 2016, Sir David Attenborough visited Askham Bog Nature Reserve in York and condemned proposals to build 516 homes on adjacent land, citing the location as a "Cathedral of conservation" (Lewis, 2016). Unsurprisingly, Attenborough's visit attracted the attention of journalists and lead City of York Council to abandon the plans altogether four years later (BBC News, 2020), meaning that Attenborough's engagement with the proposal increased salience towards the biodiversity of the nature reserve (Stibbe, 2020).

A content analysis of Facebook statuses and the findings of six semi-structured interviews with members of Greenpeace leadership revealed that Greenpeace used Facebook to inform and encourage individuals to engage with the *Unfriend Coal* campaign (Katz-Kimchi & Manosevitch, 2015). The campaign was devised in opposition to Facebook's energy policy

and ran from February 2010 to December 2011 following the news that Facebook were planning to power their new data centre in Oregon using coal.

The study highlights the benefits of using social media to encourage individuals to engage in environmental activism and the role that campaigners play in the fight against climate change (Katz-Kimchi & Manosevitch, 2015). A quantitative, content analysis evaluated the extent in which Greenpeace used Facebook to share updates about the progress of the campaign and to encourage individuals to like, share and comment on posts about the campaign (Katz-Kimchi & Manosevitch, 2015). This was accompanied by a qualitative, content analysis of statuses posted by Greenpeace on Facebook in order to retrieve key themes from the campaign. This analysis found that actions, such as translating posts into different languages, the positive portrayal of Facebook (despite their relationship with the fossil fuels industry) and organising online, Facebook events increased salience towards the campaign (Katz-Kimchi & Manosevitch, 2015).

On the one hand, these findings demonstrate that online communication campaigns (OCCs) can be just as effective - if not *more* effective - than real-life protests and demonstrations. Figures estimate that the campaign was supported by more than 680,000 people at its peak (Carus, 2011). Should the popularity of OCCs increase - which is highly-likely - then more individuals will be able to engage in environmental activism. On the other hand, these findings show how technology can contribute to the search for new stories-to-live-by (Stibbe, 2020). In other words, OCCs eliminate the need to travel to protest and demonstration sites, resulting in a reduction in air pollution.

This belief that technology can contribute to the search for new stories-to-live-by (rather than increase environmental destruction) is supported by Poole and Sprangler (2020), who conducted an ecolinguistic analysis of the *Nintendo DS game, Animal Crossing: New Leaf*. The analysis found that the game normalises ecological identities, behaviours and practices, such as recycling or donating used goods to the recycling in exchange for money (Poole & Sprangler, 2020). Therefore, the findings of Katz-Kimchi and Manosevitch (2015) and Poole and Sprangler (2020) confirm that technology can reveal stories about climate change and environmental issues that subsequently inspire individuals to engage in more ecologically-conscious behaviours and practices.

A comparative analysis of arguments for and against plans to build an open-pit copper mine in the Santa Rita Mountains of Arizona examined how the beliefs, values and perceptions of

an international mining company and an environmental advocacy group were encapsulated by grammatical and semantic features (Poole, 2016). A corpus-assisted, ecological discourse analysis located a destructive and dominant discourse in favour of the plans in the mining company texts, whilst a discourse of aesthetic value and the need for environmental stewardship and justice in the environmental advocacy group texts (Poole, 2016).

Meanwhile, an investigation into the hegemony of the JOB VS. ENVIRONMENT[1] frame in two, civil society campaigns in the Hunters Region of New South Wales, Australia revealed how this frame obstructs the transition to a carbon-neutral society (Evans & Phelan, 2016). Interestingly, both the *T4* and *Groundswell* campaigns emphasised the importance of environmental justice, however, T4 highlighted the impact of coal mining on air pollution and human health, whilst Groundswell explained the risks of coal mining and claimed that the industry only provided eleven jobs for local residents (Evans & Phelan, 2016).

Together, these studies communicate the common ideology that MAKING MONEY AND PROTECTING JOBS IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN PRESERVING THE ENVIRONMENT, which Stibbe (2020: 37) found to be prevalent in the public discourse. He also found a similar ideology (i.e. that HUMANS ARE FUNDAMENTALLY SELFISH) to be commonplace in micro-economics textbooks, which perpetuates consumerist identities because it emphasises the "need" to buy unnecessary and ecologically-destructive products or services and implies that MAKING MONEY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN PRESERVING THE ENVIRONMENT - which, once again, shows that there are barriers to the successfulness of ECDs.

In order to ascertain the effectiveness of public information campaigns about environmental issues, Latinopoulos, Charalampos & Bithas (2018) evaluated the reception of a public information campaign, which was designed to encourage residents of the Greek Island of Syros to reduce their plastic consumption. The study consisted of a choice experiment which asked participants to select alternative coastal protection programmes. The choice experiment comprised two surveys, the first of which collected the responses of 185 participants *before* the campaign. The second survey recorded the responses of 156 participants *during* the campaign (Latinopoulos *et al*., 2018). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the majority of the respondents agreed that individual actions were necessary to tackle plastic pollution and individuals who already engaged in recycling behaviours (90% of the participants) were generally in favour of

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[1] Small capital letters are used to indicate that this is a story-we-live-by. The reason for using small capital letters is because Stibbe uses them to introduce stories in his own research, which I believe makes them clear and stand out to the reader.

a complete ban on plastic carrier bags (Latinopoulos *et al*., 2018). Furthermore, protecting coastal and marine environments was considered to be fundamentally important to local residents and they were generally willing to support plastic reduction measures, regardless of the context or their understanding of this issue (Latinopoulos *et al*., 2018).

However, the results of the choice experiments are highly-predictable because clearly individuals will want to protect their local area in order to maintain standards of cleanliness and protect house prices. However, this study does not specify whether residents were willing to support any other plastic reduction measures in addition to a ban on plastic carrier bags. It also suggests that a large proportion of the population are still unaware of what does and does not constitute plastic waste - other than plastic carrier bags - which is, once again, concerning.

The results of an online survey completed by 434 US Millennials revealed that individuals with strong social ties (i.e. those with connections to multiple social networks, including family, friends, classmates and colleagues) are more likely to engage in recycling behaviours and like, share and comment on recycling-related posts on social media (Ram Lee *et al*., 2018). Furthermore, an individuals' psychological proximity to an issue (i.e. how personally important or close a particular issue is to them) can influence their willingness to engage in recycling behaviours offline (Ram Lee *et al*., 2018).

In some respects, these findings are unsurprising as previous studies have already found that the more important an environmental issue is to an individual, the more likely they are to act on it. For instance, three laboratory investigations and a field experiment using *Google AdWords* indicated that for individuals that were not initially concerned about a particular, environmental issue, the use of non-assertive language managed to encourage them to engage with the issue (Kronrod *et al*., 2012). Whilst this study examines the role of assertive language - rather than the likelihood of an individual engaging in ecologically-responsible behaviours and practices, such as recycling - it does reinforce that an individuals' psychological proximity to an issue can affect the likelihood of them responding to an environmental message.

However, there are limitations to the study; the first of which Ram Lee *et al*. rightfully cite themselves. Firstly, the respondents of the survey were all Millennials (Ram Lee *et al*., 2018), which represents a relatively small group in society. Secondly, the survey did not allow

respondents to explain *how often* they recycle/ intend to recycle, so it is not abundantly clear how genuine or frequent their recycling behaviours or intentions to recycle are.

Manika *et al*. (2019) investigated students' attitudes towards the use of corporate sponsors in environmental campaign posters at UK universities. 231 students were asked to complete a questionnaire which revealed that whilst many students believed that the campaign posters were effective, others felt that too many students remained uneducated about environmental issues or assumed that they could consume obscene amounts of electricity in student accommodation, without damaging the environment (Manika *et al*., 2019). Furthermore, students living in university-managed accommodation were more aware of the posters than students living off-campus in privately-owned accommodation. Data from 40 vox pop interviews also revealed that many students believed that corporate sponsors are an effective way of encouraging students to engage with environmental issues, but only because they offer incentives to participate (i.e. product discounts, vouchers) (Manika *et al*., 2019).

Clearly, an important question to raise with regard to this study is whether universities *need* to employ corporate sponsors to endorse environmental campaign posters in the first place, or whether they could just as easily ask environmental studies students, student-led environmental advocacy groups or societies or even an external environmental organisation instead. The fact that corporate sponsors have been employed makes it unsurprising that so many students had negative attitudes towards the campaign posters (Manika *et al*., 2019). It could also be argued that using corporate sponsors is a form of *greenwashing* if the company endorsing the campaign does not engage in environmental behaviours and practices themselves. Similarly, the study included data from a relatively small sample of students and few of these were mature students since 73.8% of the sample were 18 to 25 year-olds (Manika *et al*., 2019). Therefore, it is unclear whether a lack of engagement with environmental issues is simply an issue among younger students or whether this is the case across the entire student population.

A relatively small body of literature has studied the role of images and other semiotic modes of communication in ECDs, however, Gulliver *et al*. (2020) used data from three experiments to measure the impact of environmental images on participants' willingness to participate in collective actions responses against coal mining. They found that the effectiveness of environmental images is inconsistent (Gulliver *et al*., 2020). For instance, sometimes the presence and type of image inspired collective action responses – either directly or indirectly

– but not always. Moreover, sometimes these images enabled individuals to recognise the importance of collective action responses (Gulliver *et al*., 2020).

Adopting the social identity model of collective action for all three experiments, the first experiment used a counterfeit campaign, *Stop Coal Mining Now*, to evaluate the impact that images have on collective action responses. This experiment was unsuccessful, as in the comprehension tests at the beginning of the experiment, participants were required to declare whether they had seen the images before and 79% of the 252 participants answered no (Gulliver *et al*., 2020). In light of this, a follow-up experiment found that descriptive norms (i.e. an individuals' personal perception of what does and does not constitute a collective action response) enhanced efficacy, which, in turn, stimulated collective action responses (Gulliver *et al*., 2020). The third experiment – which was similar to the second experiment, only it included more environmentally-related images - found that more images led participants to assume that more individuals act on environmental issues (Gulliver *et al*., 2020). In theory, the notion that images are more likely to stimulate individuals to act on environmental issues makes logical sense since images showcase real-life examples of activism which encourages individuals to get involved because they are able to see for themselves what it is like to be an environmental activist.

2.3 Discourses of Responsibility

In an article for the environmental philosophy journal, *Trumpeter*, Kahn (1992) condemned the erasure of animals and moral responsibility in a report published by the Wildlife Society Bulletin on the environmental impact of poisoning wild coyotes with sodium monofluoracetate. Using Eco-Critical Discourse Analysis (ECDA), Kahn found that the report lacked use of the active voice and personal pronouns -except for the second-person pronoun, "we", which was only used to describe research methodologies. There were also an abundance of euphemisms, which were used to positively portray animal experimentation, research and management, but also to erase the fact that scientific researchers were responsible for these unethical and ecologically-destructive practices (Kahn, 1992).

More than twenty years later, Alexander (2013) conducted a corpus-assisted CDA which examined the role of metaphors, euphemisms and the semantic field of obligation and duty in a series of press releases published by British Petroleum (BP) following the 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill. Alexander discovered that BP only eluded to 'responsibility' on nine,

separate occasions, whilst the actual word, 'responsibility', was mentioned once (Alexander, 2013).

Together, the findings of Kahn (1992) and Alexander (2013) highlight that the English language is not as holistic and attentive as it could and should be. This view is shared by the founder of *Systemic Functional Linguistics* (SFL), Michael Halliday, who discussed how mass nouns, such as 'water' and 'soil', erase the fact that many natural resources that human rely on in their everyday lives are in limited supply (Halliday, 1990). Likewise, Chawla (1991) explained how mass and abstract nouns are often described in a similar manner in English, making it harder to differentiate between real-life and imaginary concepts.

Consequently, the lack of holisticness and attentiveness within the English language - compared with other languages, such as Amerindian languages (Chawla, 1991) and the language used by the Dayak-Ngaju community in Central Kalimantan (Luardini, Asi & Garner, 2019) - leads individuals to assume that they can consume as much food, water and energy as they wish, without damaging the environment. Therefore, individuals cannot be expected to behave in an ecologically-responsible manner if they are simply unaware that their everyday actions are ecologically-destructive and thus irresponsible in the first place.

Regarding Kahn (1992) and Alexander (2013), it could be argued that the erasure of corporate responsibility is deliberate because ecologically-destructive practices are subtly erased through use of the passive voice, metaphors and euphemisms, which ultimately enable these corporations to sustain their reputation. Had these corporations have been honest about the ecological damage that they had caused, then individuals would have probably boycotted their products and services (in the case of businesses) or questioned whether their research is necessary and ethical (in the case of scientists).

Ecolinguists have also examined the erasure of the natural environment and environmental damage in public discourses. For instance, a corpus-assisted CDA of collocations in a series of scientific articles published by the *BBC World Service* revealed that ecological and natural phenomena were primarily discussed in relation to environmental issues, such as climate change (Goatly, 2002). Consequently, three, dominant discourses were identified: economics, warfare and politics (Goatly, 2002). Furthermore, weather-related events were frequently introduced in everyday conversation and in weather forecasts using the active voice, almost as though they were controlled by humans (Goatly, 2002).

More recently, Stibbe (2019) revealed that, despite regular patterns of warm and sunny weather being a clear indication of climate change, such weather patterns were generally portrayed positively in the public discourse. For instance, warm and sunny weather was typically associated with family days-out, barbecues, summer holidays and other leisure activities, such as outdoor swimming, sun bathing and drinking alcohol in beer gardens. Stibbe also found that travel agent discourses marketised warm and sunny weather as well as international travel to tropical destinations as a necessity, creating what Stibbe had previously referred to in earlier research (see Stibbe, 2009) as a *pseudo-satisfier discourse*: i.e. a 'promise' that if individuals travel to these destinations, then they will enhance their quality of life. Conversely, cold, rainy and windy weather was portrayed negatively and perceived as bad weather (Stibbe, 2019).

Regarding Goatly (2002), the erasure of the natural environment, once again, clearly demonstrates a lack of holisticness and attentiveness towards the environment from English language users (Halliday, 1990; Chawla, 1991). This reinforces how nature and the environment are exploited by humans and perceived as something that is out of their control. Likewise, the use of active voice in weather reporting is problematic because weather forecasts and conversations about the weather and weather-related events are a fundamental part of our everyday lives.

In the case of travel agent discourses, it could be argued that individuals avoid taking personal responsibility for their actions because they are led to assume that they are entitled to hot and sunny weather. Therefore, travel agents discourses are destructive discourses which essentially encourage individuals to act irresponsibly (i.e. jet off to tropical destinations abroad) in order to experience warmer and sunnier weather (Stibbe, 2019)The same could be said for discourses surrounding *staycations*, which have become increasingly commonplace over the past two years, due to restrictions on international travel as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The staycation discourse communicates that holidaying in the UK is inferior to holidaying abroad. This supports Chawla's (1991) view that the English language is not as attentive and holistic as some indigenous languages as well as Stibbe's (2019) view that English language users do not experience the *weatherworld* (i.e. enjoy all types of weather in the location that they are in, rather than try to escape it by going on holiday to experience different types of weather (Ingold, 2007)) in the way that Japanese language users, for instance, do (Stibbe, 2019).

Applying a grounded theory approach, Gammelgaard Ballantyne *et al.* (2021) identified three discourses of responsibility across a series of Danish media texts concerning microplastics pollution: consumer, political and industry. The consumer responsibility discourse assumed that consumers were responsible for microplastic pollution because their spending habits created the demand for microplastics in the first place, whereas the political responsibility discourse assumed that politicians were responsible for microplastics pollution because they have the power to introduce legislation which prohibits or limits the production and / or sale of products containing microplastics. The industry responsibility assumed that industries were responsible for microplastics pollution because of a lack of dialogues or conversations with stakeholders that acknowledge the microplastics issue (Gammelgaard Ballantyne *et al.*, 2021). The study found that discourses of consumer (i.e. individual / personal) responsibility were more commonplace than discourses of political / industry responsibility, despite the fact that politicians and industries have more power, money and specialist knowledge to resolve this issue.

2.4 Conclusion

The first half of this chapter successfully located and synthesised a substantial body of academic literature regarding the role, properties and impact of ECDs. The existing literature covers a wide range of environmental issues, including food production and non-renewable energy (Packwood Freeman, 2010; Evans & Phelan, 2016; Poole, 2016). It also suggests that online and television campaigning can be just as effective - if not more effective - than public protests and demonstrations (Katz-Kimchi & Manosevitch, 2015; Latinopoulos *et al.*, 2018) and highlights that non-local actors (i.e. celebrities or NGOs) can increase salience towards local campaigns (Rootes, 2013).

However, a relatively small body of academic literature has studied the effects of grammatical, lexical and semantic features in ECDs (Poole, 2016), so this research will closely examine these features of ECDs. Likewise, few studies have examined the role of semiotic modes of communication in ECDs (Gulliver *et al.*, 2020), which is surprising when one considers that many semiotic features (i.e. road signs) can be universally-recognised (Chandler, 2007), meaning that they have the power to attract the attention of text-receivers in ways that grammatical, lexical and semantic features cannot. Consequently, this research will evaluate the semiotic modes of communication in ECDs. Much of the existing literature adopts multidisciplinary approaches, such content analysis and discourse analysis (i.e.

Packwood Freeman, 2010; Katz-Kimchi & Manosevitch, 2015), that are employed by multiple disciplines, such as business studies, environmental science, politics, politics, psychology and sociology, which demonstrates a demand for more linguistics-based research into ECDs. Finally, Manika et al. (2019) were the only researchers to examine the effectiveness of environmental campaign posters. Therefore, this research will study campaign posters.

The second half of this chapter located a substantial body of literature that investigates how corporations accept/ avoid accepting responsibility. However, much of the existing literature considers the erasure and marginalisation of nature and the environment (Kahn, 1992; Goatly, 2002; Alexander, 2013; Stibbe, 2019), rather than the erasure of responsibility from large businesses, politicians, journalists and scientists (although see Gammelgaard Ballantyne *et al*., 2021).

The literature also outlines a number of barriers to the acceptance of responsibility. For instance, Halliday (1990) and Chawla (1991) describe how the grammatical features of English are not as holistic or attentive as the grammatical features of some indigenous languages. This means that individuals are often led to assume that their individual actions have little or no impact on the environment. In other words, individual do not accept responsibility for their personal actions because they are simply unaware that their actions are ecologically-destructive in the first place.

CHAPTER 3 ANALYTICAL AND
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will introduce the analytical and theoretical frameworks that are employed for the purpose of analysing the data. It will also discuss how previous application of these frameworks and a diverse range of ecological philosophies inspired this project. The chapter will not explain *why* these frameworks have been employed or the data that they have been used to analyse because this will be explained in Chapter 4.

3.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) is a multidisciplinary approach which explores how "social-power, abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (Van Dijk, 2015: 466). It differs from DA (discourse analysis) as this is simply the analysis of language - written or spoken - within a particular social context, beyond the sentence-level (Bhatia, Flowerdew & Jones, 2008: 1). CDA was founded by researchers from the University of East Anglia during the 1970s (Fowler *et al*., 1979) when discourse analysts became interested in the critical study of language as a means of challenging social inequalities, power asymmetries and ideological struggles (Van Dijk, 2015) and was influenced by a consortium of philosophical and sociological theorists, including Louis Althusser, Pierre Bourdieu, Michael Foucault, Antonio Gramsci and Karl Marx (Fairclough, 1995).

It must be emphasised that *critical* does not necessarily mean *criticising* (Fairclough, 2015). It is commonly assumed that this misinterpretation may have transpired following the development of *Positive Discourse Analysis* (PDA) (Wodak & Chilton, 2005), which is a discourse-analytic approach that examines what texts "do well" or "get right" (Macgilchrist, 2007). Unsurprisingly, PDA has been condemned by some critical discourse analysts, including Ruth Wodak and Paul Chilton, who claimed that PDA implies that CDA is *negative discourse analysis* (Wodak & Chilton, 2005). Whilst these concerns are justifiable, it is worth noting that PDA only examines the positive aspects of texts, whereas CDA considers both the positive *and* negative aspects of texts. Therefore, PDA is neither inferior nor superior to CDA and should *complement* CDA, rather than attempt to function as a stand-alone approach (Bartlett, 2017).

CDA addresses social problems, including discrimination, gender inequality, racism and social class (Van Dijk, 2015) within institutional, political and media texts (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). This means that CDA is a popular choice of approach for analysts in a diverse range of subjects, including cognitive and social psychology, human geography, politics and sociology (Wodak, 1996). Furthermore, discourse-analytic approaches - like CDA – are sometimes employed by business leaders, historians, lawyers, medics and politicians that are looking to address social problems within their industries (Bloor & Bloor, 2007).

Despite its multidisciplinarity, many of the key tenants of CDA (i.e. Norman Fairclough, Teun Van Dijk, Ruth Wodak) have not disclosed in sufficient detail the true benefits of using CDA to address environmental concerns. However, an increasingly large number of ecolinguists and environmental communicator (for instance Kahn, 1992; Goatly, 2002; Stibbe, 2004; Stamou & Paraskevopoulos, 2004; Alexander, 2013; Evans & Phelans, 2016) have used CDA – either by itself or in tandem with ecolinguistic approaches - to address environmental concerns .

It must be emphasised that there is no monolithic way of 'doing CDA' (Van Dijk, 2015: 468) because CDA is *pluralistic* and is thus influenced by other social, cultural and economic theories, perspectives and techniques from the humanities, social sciences and even, in some cases, the natural sciences (Breeze, 2011). This means that one analyst may choose to focus exclusively, for instance, on the use of metaphors in texts (see Hart, 2010), whilst another may combine CDA with other quantitative or qualitative research methods, such as corpus linguistics (see Alexander & Stibbe, 2014). Some analysts are more interested in studying semiotic modes of communication, such as images, colours, camera shots and gestures (i.e. Machin & Mayer, 2012).

There are also different approaches CDA, which are often referred to as *frameworks* for CDA (see Fairclough, 2015 for instance). Norman Fairclough's framework examines the *dialectical* (i.e. oppositional) relationship between language, discourse, power and society (Fairclough, 1989; 2015) via three stages of textual analysis: the *description*, *interpretation* and *explanation* stages (otherwise known as the *micro* (text), *meso* (interaction) and *macro* (context) levels of analysis (Fairclough, 2015)). The description stage (micro-level) of analysis simply involves identifying the discursive strategies (i.e. patterns of language) of a text(s), such as patterns of grammar or vocabulary, whilst the interpretation stage analyses these patterns of language in relation to the socio-political context and the explanation stage

involves the social analysis of the text (Fairclough, 2015). In other words, it examines how the socio-cultural practices that readers engage with in their everyday lives affects the meaning of a text. Previously, Fairclough's framework has been applied to deconstruct discourses surrounding global capitalism and political discourse (Bloor & Bloor, 2007).

CONTEXT

INTERACTION

TEXT

DESCRIPTION STAGE
○ Micro-level of analysis (i.e. analyses the linguistic features that contribute to the text's production, such as grammar vocabulary and rhetorical devices)

INTERPRETATION STAGE
○ Meso-level of analysis (i.e. examines the relationship between the text-producer and text-receiver and how this relationship influences how the text-receiver interprets the text)

EXPLANATION STAGE
○ Macro-level of analysis (i.e. examines the relationship between the text-receiver and the socio-political context)

Figure 3.2.1 Fairclough's framework for Critical Discourse Analysis. Adapted from: Fig. 2.1 Discourse as text, interaction and context. In: Fairclough, N. (2015) *Language and power*. 3rd ed. London, Routledge, pp. 58-59.

Alternatively, Ruth Wodak's *Discourse-Historical Approach* (DHA) evaluates the social, historical, political and psychological contexts that encompass texts to foreground analyses, comparing and contrasting texts of similar genres, as well as those sharing similar lines of argument (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). The DHA takes a more scientific approach to the study of texts than other critical discourse-analytic approaches. For instance, in a pilot study of online reporting on climate change, Wodak and Reisigl (2021: 36) suggested that a good starting point would be to, define 'climate change' in relation to the existing, scientific literature and then to establish what the literature communicates about the relationship between 'climate change' and society (i.e. *how does this relationship influence how individuals think about climate change and how they behave in society?*). A key difference between the DHA and other CDA frameworks is that researchers adopting this approach often incorporate data from interviews and focus groups to support textual analyses. Wodak *et al.* (1998; 2009) examined the discursive construction of national identities in Austria and used data from

interviews and focus groups to gain an understanding into how concepts, such as "nation", are perceived differently within society (Wodak *et al.*, 2009: 3).

Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) was developed during the late 1980s and 1990s to account for the lack of linguistic attention given towards visual and semiotic modes of communication, such as light sources, colours, photographs, gestures, etc. in linguistic analyses (Machin & Mayr, 2012: 6). Inspired by the work of Stuart Hall (Cultural Studies, 1973) and Michael Halliday (Systematic Functional Linguistics (SFL), 1978), MCDA has traditionally been used to analyse texts, such as posters (Belgrimet & Rabab'ah, 2021), textbooks (Stamou & Paraskevopoulos, 2004) and images in news articles (Machin & Mayr, 2012), and a prime example of an MCDA framework is Van Leeuwen's (1996; 2004) *Social-Semiotic Approach* to the visual analysis of images, which explores how meaning can be conveyed through visual and semiotic modes of communication, such as images and colours.

3.3 The Socio-Cognitive Approach to Critical Discourse Analysis

Much like the DHA, the *Socio-Cognitive Approach* (SCA) or *Discourse-Cognition-Society Triangle* has previously been used to address social problems, such as ethnic prejudice and racism (Van Dijk, 2008a). This approach was designed with the purpose of uncovering how text-producers (i.e. journalists, politicians and advertisers) use and abuse the fact that they have access to and control over a wide range of discourse genres (Van Dijk, 2015). Considering this approach in its triangular state (see Figure 3.3.1), the bottom, left-hand angle of the triangle analyses the discourse (i.e. textual) structures that contribute to a text's production (Van Dijk, 2015). According to Van Dijk (2002), discourse structures and social structures are *mediated by cognitive processes* because the text-receiver requires prior knowledge of language and language structures as well as experience of using language in order to be able to *interpret* the meaning of a text. The text-producer also requires prior knowledge of language and experience of using language in order to be able to *produce* a text plus an awareness of culture, history and society, including context, expectations, order, processes, norms and practices, in order to be able to interpret the meaning of a text or to be able to produce a text that the rest of society would be able to comprehend (Van Dijk, 2017).

Unlike other critical discourse analysts, such as Fairclough, Van Dijk does not provide a graphic representation of his approach, which has led other scholars, including O'Laughlin to create their own. Figure 3.3.1 is an adaptation of a diagram provided by O'Laughlin (2013: 59).
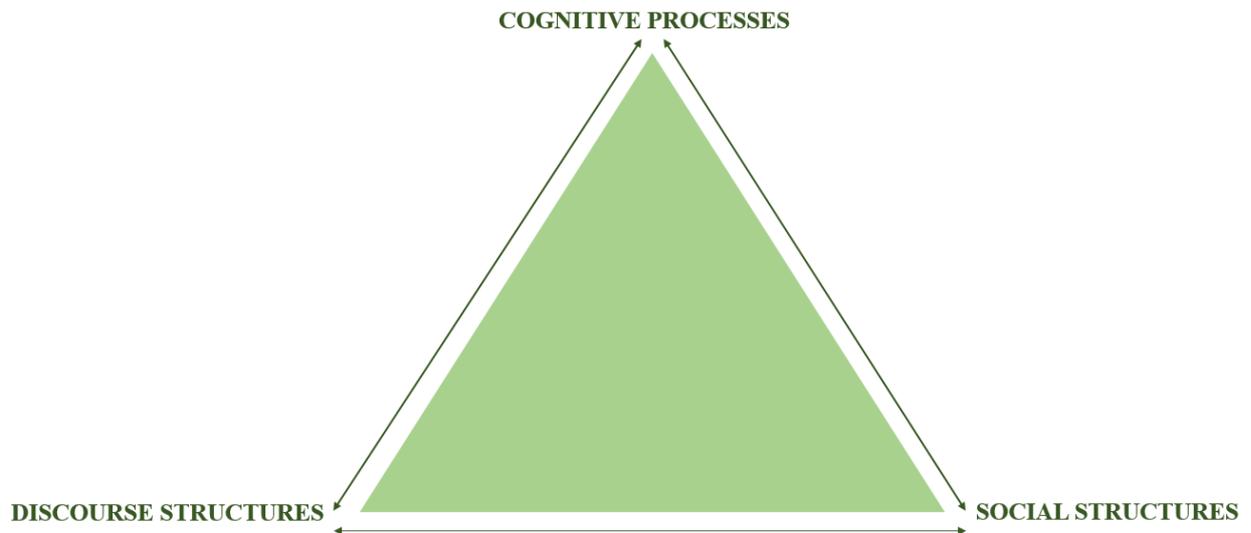
COGNITIVE PROCESSES

DISCOURSE STRUCTURES

SOCIAL STRUCTURES

Figure 3.3.1 Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Approach to Critical Discourse Analysis. Adapted from: Figure 3.1 A graphic representation of the relationship between discourse, cognition, and society. In: O'Laughlin, L.C. (2013) *The least restrictive environment clause of the individuals with disabilities education act and institutional ableism: a critical discourse analysis*. Published doctoral thesis, Clemson University, Clemson, pp. 59.

According to Van Dijk (2008a), there are two processes of cognition: personal and social cognition. Personal cognitions determine how individual language users - as members of particular social groups - subjectively produce and interpret text and talk (Van Dijk, 2014: 123). They are stored as mental models (i.e. memories, personal accounts of events) in the episodic (i.e. personal) memory of the text-receiver and are activated, applied and adapted when language users interact with each other (Van Dijk, 2008a). Social cognitions are the attitudes, beliefs, experiences, ideologies, memories, norms, knowledge and values that are shared by a particular social group (i.e. a business, political party, school, workplace) and are stored as mental models in the semantic (i.e. social) memory (Van Dijk, 2009: 19).

In the past, Van Dijk's approach has been used to examine discourses of denial – particularly in relation to racial and ethnic prejudice – and analysts applying this approach have studied the effects of a broad range of discourse structures, including the use of mind-control and manipulation (see Van Dijk, 2015 for instance). Mind-control can occur in a variety of forms; for instance, text-producers may signpost or highlight facts and information that influence the minds of text-receivers and lead them to assume that these are of significance to them as a reader (Van Dijk, 2015). Similarly, manipulation is a communicative and interactional

practice that involves the abuse of power, and typically occurs when text-receivers are unable to comprehend the true meaning behind an ideology that the text-producer perpetuates (Van Dijk, 2008b: 212).

3.4 Ecolinguistics

In the early twentieth century, Edward Sapir studied the fundamental relationship between language and the natural environment and discovered that many Indo-Germanic language users - including English language users - lacked a holistic and attentive relationship with nature and the environment (Sapir, 1912). For instance, few English language knew the individual names for different varieties of weed, unlike members of an Indian tribe that relied on weeds as a source of food (Sapir, 1912)

Decades later, Einar Haugen explored the *ecology of language* or *language ecology* (Haugen, 1972). Haugenian ecolinguistics – as it is commonly known as (Kravchenko, 2016) – assumes that language ecology is *psychological* (since language exists in the minds of humans), but also *sociological* (since humans use language to interact with other humans and to connect with their natural and social surroundings) (Haugen, 1972). Put simply, it studies the 'life' and death of language as opposed to the structural elements (i.e. grammatical, lexical, phonological, semantic) of language (Dil, 1972) and language ecologists have, in the past, investigated a diverse range of issues relating to the 'life' and death of language, including code-switching, language shift, language death, pidginization and creolisation (Steffenson & Fill, 2014).

However, Haugenian ecolinguistics differs from contemporary ecolinguistics - which was developed during the 1990s and is generally either *text-critical* (i.e. it studies particular texts or case studies) or *system-critical* (i.e. it critiques the way in which language is used in a particular social context) in its approach (Fill & Muhlhausler, 2006). Since then, ecolinguists have investigated a wide variety of issues, including the role of images in eco-tourism visitors' books (Stamou & Paraskevopoulos, 2004), how hegemonic discourses of masculinity in men's health and fitness magazines perpetuate social identities that are ecologically-destructive (Stibbe, 2004) and discourses of cyclists, motorists and public transport (Caimotto, 2020).

3.5 Ecolinguistics: Language, Ecology and The Stories-We-Live-By

As previously defined (see page 11), the *stories-we-live-by* are the beliefs, values, opinions and habits of humans that influence how we think and behave (Stibbe, 2020: 6). They are multimodal and can be expressed through writing, songs, pictures and even items of clothing (Stibbe, 2020: 11) and there are *nine* ways in which they can be revealed through linguistic analysis, including by *ideologies* and *discourse*. Ideologies are "belief systems about how the world was, is, will be or should be which are shared by members of particular groups in society" (Stibbe, 2020: 21). They may be based on assumptions or presuppositions that people have about society. For instance, a bottled water brand might claim that its, "Source has been specifically chosen for its excellent water quality, stable mineral composition and purity", in the marketisation of bottled water (Harrogate Spring Water, no date). Ideologically, this statement positively portrays the brand and the bottled water industry as a whole, meaning that, soon, buying bottled water becomes a cultural and social norm or practice (i.e. a story-we-live-by) because consumers attribute buying bottled water with "quality" and "purity" when, in reality, buying bottled water is ecologically-destructive because it increases litter and plastic pollution.

Stories can also be revealed by *frames* and *framings*. According to Stibbe (2020: 41), framing is a type of story which involves "the use of a story from one area of life (a frame) to structure how another area of life is conceptualised". For instance, Molwyn Joseph (Minister for Health and the Environment in Antigua and Barbuda) explained at the *Press Conference on the PGA's Global Campaign Against Plastic Pollution* in April 2019 that there was "a recent image being shared on social media regarding the discovery of a sea of plastics, in the Caribbean sea, that stretches miles and miles, and is choking our sea life" (Joseph, 2019). The phrase "chocking our sea life" informs the text-receiver (i.e. activates the frame) that PLASTIC POLLUTION IS BAD and so they must reduce their single-use plastic consumption in order to preserve "sea life". There are occasions when a frame is changed (re-framed) so that is describes an area of life in an unusual way that the text-receiver might not expect. Stibbe (2020: 53) calls this *frame modification* and an example of this would if Joseph had said in his speech that litter and plastic pollution is a small, containable issue because this contrasts our expectation that litter and plastic pollution is a big and highly-overwhelming issue.

Metaphors are a type of framing in the sense that they use "a frame from a specific, concrete and imaginable area of life to structure how a clearly distinct area of life is conceptualised"

(Stibbe, 2020: 60). Metaphors comprise a *target frame*, which is essentially the subject of the metaphor, and a *source frame*, which is the expected response of the metaphor (Stibbe, 2020; 60). In Joseph's speech, within the phrase, "sea of plastic", the target frame is plastic pollution and the source frame is encouraging individuals to reduce their single-use plastic consumption, wherever possible. Another way in which stories can also be revealed is by *evaluations* and *appraisal patterns*. Evaluations are "stories in people's mind about whether an area of life is good or bad" (Stibbe, 2020: 79). Re-using bottled water example, the brand may include a positive appraisal pattern (i.e. lots of positive language choices) in the marketisation of the product, claiming that it is a "refreshing, perfectly-balanced drink", "the world's finest water", "quality guaranteed" and "bottled at the source", to try and sell as many bottles as possible and thus make a profit (Harrogate Spring Water, no date). However, this leads consumers to assume that BOTTLED WATER IS GOOD, BUT WATER FROM THE TAP IS BAD, which, in turn, encourages the unnecessary consumption of bottled water.

They can also be revealed by *convictions* and *facticity patterns*. According to Stibbe (2020: 121), convictions are "stories in people's minds about whether a particular description (of the world) is true, certain, uncertain or false". For instance, the phrase, "litter and plastic pollution is damaging the environment", is factually correct and therefore has a high-facticity, whereas, saying that "litter and plastic pollution *might be* damaging the environment" has a much lower facticity. The facticity of a statement is generally higher when high-modality verbs, such as "definitely", "must be", "fact", "know", "confirmed", "evidence shows that" are included in a statement, whereas, low-modality verbs, such as "is not", "cannot" "certainly not" carry a much lower facticity (Stibbe, 2020).

According to Stibbe (2020: 107), *identities* are stories "in people's minds about what it means to be a particular kind of person, including appearance, character, behaviour and values". In advertising, identities are frequently socially-constructed in an ecologically-destructive manner; for instance, Gargan (2007) described how women's perfume advertisements socially construct the ideology that, without perfume, women are unattractive and undesirable, which encourages women to buy perfume, that may contain synthetic materials that are ecologically-destructive, in order to be considered attractive, desirable and feminine.

The seventh story concerns *erasure*, which is "a story in people's minds that an area of life is unimportant or unworthy of consideration" (Stibbe, 2020: 141). In the previous chapter, I discussed the work of Kahn (1992) (see page 21) which found that scientists omit (erase)

immoral or unethical research practices in their reports. According to Stibbe, 2020: 144-145), there are *three* types of erasure. The first type is when an aspect of life is present in reality, but absent in the text, meaning that the erased aspect of life has been placed into *the void*. For instance, as mentioned by Kahn (1992), scientists erase immoral and unethical research practices, but that does not mean that these practices are not taking place in reality. Secondly, there is *the trace*, where an aspect of life is present in reality, but only a hint or indirect reference to it is apparent in the text (Stibbe, 2020: 145). In the previous chapter, I explained how Alexander (2013) (see page 21) found that BP only eluded to responsibility on nine, isolated occasions in the press releases and only actually mentioned the word 'responsibility' once. This is an example of erasure in the form of the trace because BP indirectly accept responsibility for the oil spill. Then there is *the mask*, which is where an area of life is completely erased and replaced with a distorted version of events (Stibbe, 2020: 144).

Salience is "a story that an area of life is important and worthy of attention" (Stibbe, 2020: 160). In ecological and environmental discourses, text-producers use salience to emphasise the importance of a particular issue or debate so as to encourage individuals to acknowledge it in order to protect the environment. Salience is multi-modal and can consist of photographs, images, illustrations or the use of a particular colour (Stibbe, 2020). Stibbe (2007) discovered that Japanese haiku (which is a type of nature writing) increases salience towards animals, plants and nature because it enables humans to strengthen their relationship with nature and the local environment.

The latest edition to Stibbe's framework - which features in the second edition of *Ecolinguistics: Language, Ecology and The Stories We Live By* – considers how stories can revealed by *narratives*. According to Stibbe (2020: 182), narratives are the most powerful way in which a story can be revealed and "stories in people's mind which involve a sequence of logically connected events". Narratives can reveal important messages or morals about society's relationship with nature and the environment. For instance, the prototypical narrative for climate change assumes that global warming is caused by human activity, such as burning fossil fuels. The moral of the climate change narrative (i.e. the message that it attempts to communicate to the public) is that humans should invest in renewable sources of energy, consume less and buy local produce, wherever possible, in order to lessen the impact of global warming and preserve the environment for future generations. It could be argued that the study of narratives as a means of revealing the-stories-we-live-by accounts for the

lack of attention to literary texts from critical discourse analysts (Erel & Funda, 2008) – of which Stibbe's framework is frequently combined with (Stibbe, 2014).

The below table (Table 3.5.1) is an adaptation of the one provided by Stibbe (2020: 17) which illustrates the different ways in which a story can be revealed (i.e. type of story), provides a definition for each type of story and their linguistic manifestation (i.e. how they may be represented by language). However, it offers a more detailed overview of the types of linguistic feature that may be used to reveal a particular story.

Table 3.5.1 – Types of story and how they are revealed by discourse. Adapted from: Stibbe, A. (2020) Table 1.1 Nine forms that stories take and their linguistic manifestations. In: *Ecolinguistics: language, ecology and the stories we live by*. 2nd ed. Oxford, Routledge, pp 17.

Type	Definition	Manifestation
Ideology	A story of how the world is and should be which is shared by members of a group	• Discourses • Assumptions • Presuppositions • High-modality sentences
Framing	A story that uses a packet of knowledge about an area of life (a frame) to structure another area of life	• Words and phrases that activate a particular frame (i.e. the word "shortage" triggers the frame that something is in short supply, which can lead text-receivers' to engage in irrational behaviours and practices, such as panic buying)

Metaphor	A story that uses a frame to structure a distinct and clearly different area of life	• Words and phrases that describe a specific and distinct area of life
Evaluation	A story about whether an area of life is good or bad	• Positive and negative appraisal patterns • Euphemisms • Hyperbole
Identity	A story about what it means to be a particular kind of person	• Clothing • Writing • Speech • Behaviour
Conviction	A story about whether a particular description of the world is true, false or uncertain	• Facticity patterns • High / low - modality verbs
Erasure	A story that an area of life is unimportant or unworthy of consideration	• Passive voice • Metonymy • Normalisations • Hyponyms
Salience	A story that an area of life is important or worthy of consideration	• Focus • Vitality • Levels of abstraction • Transitivity • Metaphors
Narrative	Stories in people's mind which involve a sequence of logically connected events	• Novels • Short stories • Advertisements • Newspapers • Jokes • Films • Myths

		• Anecdotes
		• Letters
		• Ceremonies

3.6 Ecological Philosophies

Imperative to all ecolinguistic research is an ecological philosophy (i.e. *ecosophy*). Ecosophies are not just philosophical statements, but "visions" of a more equitable and sustainable society, accompanied by steps that may be taken in order to achieve these "visions" (Stibbe, 2020: 13). They also explain what the purpose/ aim of a project is and why the issue that is being addressed is important. Whilst all ecosophies are unique, Table 3.6.1 (below) outlines the three, main spectrums that, according to Stibbe (2020: 13), all ecosophies fall within:

Table 3.6.1 – The three main spectrums that all ecosophies fall within. Based on: Stibbe, A. (2020) Ecosophy. In: *Ecolinguistics: language, ecology and the stories we live by*. 2nd ed. Oxford, Routledge, pp. 13.

Spectrum	Conservative	Neo-Liberal	Socialist
The ecosophy is centred around a particular form(s) of life	Anthropocentrism Industrocentrism Technocentrism	_____	Ecocentrism Biocentrism
The ecosophy is centred around a particular political ideology	_____	_____	_____
The ecosophy is centred around the likelihood of something happening	Optimistic	Realistic	Pessimistic

When developing an ecosophy, researchers may wish to consult a diverse range of existing ecosophies. For instance, the *Principle of Convergence*, which may be described as anthropocentric, conservative and optimistic, argues that policies serving the interests of humans will eventually serve the interests of animals and nature as well, meaning that such policies are highly-beneficial and should be pursued (Norton, 1991: 246). There is also the belief that *sustainable development* is the way forward because it combines economic activity with environmental stewardship and justice (Baker, 2006b), and this would be considered neo-liberal, sentiocentric (meaning that the environment should be preserved in order to protect **all** conscious beings) and realistic.

Alternatively, *The EcoRepublic* suggest that a lack of rational thinking towards environmental decisions stems from a lack of transparency and clear communication from politicians and scientists (Plumwood, 2007), whilst, Taeko (2017) explains that as natural disasters - such as the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011 – cannot be prevented, and are occurring more frequently, humanity's focus should be on developing ways to cope with disaster, rather than trying to prevent the inevitable from happening. Meanwhile, Belshaw (2014: 253) mentions how some ecological philosophers believe that humans cause that much suffering and environmental damage that a world with humans is meaningless and of no value whatsoever.

3.7 My Ecosophy

My ecosophy is that litter and plastic pollution is a highly-important environmental issue that must be tackled because it affects **all** living beings, including animals, humans and insects, and is also connected to other environmental health issues, such as air pollution and climate change. For instance, as previously discussed (see page 14), the production of plastic releases CO2 emissions (Zheng & Suh, 2019; European Commission, 2019) and the nanoparticles that plastic contains release poisonous toxins that can cause a whole host of human health problems (Schlanger, 2019). This issue must be tackled because it is often an issue that is blamed on individuals or a particular group, rather than, for instance, the businesses that produce these harmful materials, the politicians that legislate their production and the advertisers that condition us into thinking that we need products that contain ecologically-destructive materials in our lives. Litter and plastic pollution is not just an environmental issue, but also a social justice issue. It can have a negative impact on people's mental health and wellbeing (Wyles *et al*., 2016) and, like many other environmental issues, it is likely to

hit the planet's most marginalised communities, where recycling rates are low, the hardest (National Geographic, 2017).

With regard to Table 3.6.1, my ecosophy is *sentiocentric* because litter and plastic pollution must be tackled to preserve **all** living beings, not just humans. Much like Stibbe's (2015; 2020) own ecosophy, my ecosophy is *realistic* because it recognises that tackling litter and plastic pollution is a mammoth task and that there will be logistical challenges and setbacks along the way that should inspire and motivate humanity in its mission for a greener future. Politically my ecosophy falls at the *socialist* end of the spectrum since it emphasises the importance of tackling litter and plastic pollution for the good of the *whole* of society.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a thorough overview of the analytical frameworks and ecological philosophies that have been employed for data analysis purposes or have inspired this research. The next chapter will describe the data collection process and the types of data that were collected, as well as *why* and *how* these frameworks have been employed for the purpose of analysing the data and the main stories that were revealed by the analysis. It will also discuss the ethical considerations of this research.

CHAPTER 4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will describe the data collection process (4.1), how the analytical and theoretical frameworks (4.2), some of the main stories that were revealed by the analysis (4.3) and the ethical considerations of this research (4.4).

4.2 Data Collection

The data sets comprised a total of twenty environmental campaign posters concerning litter and plastic pollution that were produced or endorsed by KBT between 1st January 1971 and 31st December 1980 or 1st January 2011 and 31st December 2020. The number of posters included in the sample was completely random, however, this number meant that I was able analyse each poster individually in great depth, but also had enough posters to produce a thorough and informed comparative analysis of posters from the two decades. The decision to analyse campaign posters over other genres of campaign discourse was made because posters can raise awareness of and discourage ecologically-destructive behaviours and practices - including littering, fly-tipping and the overconsumption of single-use plastic and other non-recyclable materials - in a relatively concise yet engaging manner (Hansmann & Steimer, 2015). Television campaigns were deliberately avoided because it has been suggested that this platform does not provide an appropriate "emotional climate" for environmental messaging since television programmes, such as game shows, perpetuate ecologically-destructive behaviours and practices, including excessive spending and overconsumption (Wolburg, 2001: 471). Likewise, anti-consumption television advertisements are misplaced because individuals typically watch television for entertainment, escapism or relaxation purposes, plus these advertisements are often proceeded and/ or preceded by pro-consumption advertisements (Wolburg, 2001: 472).

Originally, this research had sought to analyse environmental campaign posters that had been published or endorsed by KBT between 1st January 1991 (i.e. the year that *The Environment Protection Act* first defined expectations of street cleanliness (Keep Britain Tidy, no date)) and 31st December 2020. However, locating posters from the 1990s and early 2000s in particular proved a challenging task given that many of these posters were only available to view in-person at public archives (i.e. The British Library and The National Archive), which had either been closed or had restricted, members-only access over the past two years, due to

the ongoing disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic. Instead, the decision was taken to compare posters from two, alternative time periods (1st January 1971 to 31st December 1980 and 1st January 2011 to 31st December 2020), since posters from these time periods could be easily sourced from the internet. Moreover since the 1970s and the present day are fifty years apart and thus distinctly different time periods, it was anticipated that comparing posters from these time periods would lead to some interesting discussion points, meaning that there were more benefits than drawbacks to analysing these posters.

For convenience, posters from the first time period (1st January 1971 to 31st December 1980) are referred to from now on as *Data Set A*. This data set consists of ten posters which were produced or endorsed by KBT between these dates, although most of the poster were created towards the beginning of the decade (i.e. during the early 1970s). Once again, the fact that most of the posters included in the finalised sample had been created towards the beginning of the decade was entirely random and purely a result of the fact that these were some of the only KBT posters from that time frame that could be accessed by the public via the internet. This particular time period was selected because, in 1971, The UK Government updated The Dangerous Litter Act, meaning that, for the first-time, acts of littering and fly-tipping were considered criminal offences and subsequently anybody caught littering or fly-tipping was issued a fine of between £10 and £100 (UK Government, 1971).

Posters from the second time period (1st January 2011 to 31st December 2020) are referred to from now on as *Data Set B*. This data set consists of ten posters which were produced or endorsed by KBT between these dates. Unlike Data Set A, many (although not all) of the posters from this data set were created towards the end of this decade. Given the rise of the internet and social media in recent years, locating posters from this decade via the internet was a much easier task than locating posters from the 1970s and 80s. This particular time period was selected because, over the past decade, litter and plastic pollution has become a more salient issue in the public discourse (see Erickson *et al*., 2014; Joyce, 2018; Eve Dunn, Mills & Verissimo, 2020 for instance). A comparison of online databases between 1970 and 2018 noted a marked increase in the number of database searches and academic literature on "plastic pollution" in the two to three years prior to 2018 (Chillcott, 2020). However, Covid-19 brought progress to tackle this issue to an abrupt halt, due to an unprecedented rise in demand for disposable PPE (i.e. plastic aprons, gloves and surgical face masks) and online shopping and takeaway delivery services when non-essential businesses were ordered to close by the government (The Economist, 2020; Flint, 2020). Therefore, it was expected that

poster published in the final year of this time period would likely be addressing this issue at a time when efforts to tackle litter and plastic pollution were put on hold or whilst society was fixated on other issues, like Covid-19.

All of the posters were retrieved from internet sources, including the KBT website and personal blogs, such as *The Voices of East Anglia*. The posters were randomly chosen from the internet, rather than because they displayed certain linguistic features. This meant that the style of poster varied from text-to-text. For instance, some posters functioned as advertisements, whilst others formed part of public information campaigns. For two of the posters (Figures 5.2.1 and 5.4.2), I was unable to source the posters as stand-alone , but found photographs of them on Twitter and believed them to be of significant analytical benefit to this research. Whilst the original owner of the photograph is unknown, I decided that it would only be fair to credit the individual/ page that posted the photographs of these posters on Twitter as well as KBT. Some posters had an abundance of written text , whilst other had very little or none. A few posters were not dated, meaning that they could not be included in the finalised data sets since they may have been released outside of these time periods. Had these posters have been dated, then it is likely that the data sets would have been larger.

The KBT campaign was the chosen case study for this research because KBT is one of the most famous anti-littering campaigns in Great Britain, having been founded by the *National Federation of Women's Institutes* in 1954 and supported by various public figures, including ABBA and Ronnie Corbett, ever since (Keep Britain Tidy, no date). KBT regularly work alongside NGOs, businesses and schools to raise awareness of litter and plastic pollution and promote ecologically-responsible behaviours and practices (see Keep Britain Tidy, 2014 for instance). This means that they have a large and diverse public following which enables them to influence societal attitudes and behaviours towards litter and plastic pollution in ways that other campaign groups, like *Surfers Against Sewage* (SAS) – founded in Cornwall, in 1990 (Surfers Against Sewage, 2022) – and *Clean Up Britain* (Clean Up Britain, 2022), which have a much smaller or perhaps more regionalised public following, cannot. Therefore, it was expected that analysing posters from the KBT campaign would have a considerable impact on public attitudes and behaviour.

However, at a first glance, it appears that KBT primarily frame litter and plastic pollution as an individual or collective responsibility. For instance, an online article about following a zero-waste lifestyle included the following statement: "It seems people are finally realising

that making choices which reduce (or eliminate) waste isn't just environmentally sensible, it also makes us happier, healthier and often a little richer too!" (Keep Britain Tidy, no date). Within this statement, the use of the inclusive pronoun, "us", and the emphasis on individual and collective actions creates the impression that tackling litter and plastic pollution is an individual and collective responsibility. Therefore, it was expected that analysing the KBT campaign in great depth would reveal the extent in which discourses of individual and collective responsibility surrounding litter and plastic pollution dominate the public discourse.

In terms of the style of campaign, it could be argued that KBT is a hybrid of a *comprehension campaign* (meaning that it informs and instructs about litter and plastic pollution and presents data as evidence that this is an important environmental issue, along with possible solutions to the problem) and a *behaviour change campaign* (meaning that it socially-constructs ecologically-responsible behaviours and practices in the hope that text-receivers engage in these) (Norton & Grecu, 2015). This is because KBT encourage ecologically-responsible behaviours, but also, especially in more recent posters, disseminate the findings of their own research to inform the text-receiver about the effects of litter and plastic pollution.

4.3 Data Analysis

The data sets were critiqued according to the analytical and theoretical frameworks, ecosophy and research aims/ questions that were introduced in previous chapters. This research applied Van Dijk's approach because it is, to date, the only CDA approach/ framework that *explicitly* acknowledges the underlying cognitive processes involved in text production and interpretation (Fairclough, 2015). Moreover, CDA (more generally) examines how dominance and inequality are socially-constructed in texts (Van Dijk, 1993). With regard to this particular project, which investigates how discourses of responsibility surrounding litter and plastic pollution (which is an environmental issue) are socially-constructed in environmental campaign posters concerning litter and plastic pollution, it was imperative to consider the representation of dominance and inequality in the posters, as ultimately, litter and plastic pollution is a power issue. This is because, as previously mentioned, corporations (i.e. large businesses, politicians and journalists) have the power, money and specialist knowledge that is required to resolve this issue, but generally speaking do not take appropriate action themselves, meaning that the world's most marginalised communities often suffer from the effects of litter and plastic pollution (National Geographic, 2020).

Previously, the SCA has been used to analyse a broad range of discourse structures, including implications and presuppositions, metaphors, passive sentence structures and nominalisations, morphology (i.e. diminutives), pronouns and syntax (Van Dijk, 2015). However, given that CDA is pluralistic and thus there is no set-way of 'doing CDA' (Van Dijk, 2015), this research recognised the importance of these structures, but also considered how other types of discourse structure, such as word-play and the use of colour, gaze, etc. were used and their linguistic effect.

The reason for combining Van Dijk's approach with Stibbe's framework is because, as previously mentioned, Stibbe's framework explores how language influences thought and behaviour as well as how humans respond or fail to respond to messages about environmental issues (Stibbe, 2020). Although Stibbe does not explicitly state that it his framework is inspired by Van Dijk's, he clearly maintains a focus on the underlying socio-cognitive processes involved in text production and interpretation from an ecological perspective. For instance, Stibbe (2020: 6) describes *stories* as *cognitive structures* that influence how people think, speak and behave in the world. Stibbe's framework has also been tailored specifically to examine ecological and environmental discourses and takes into account the role of erasure and salience, which are prevalent features of ecological and environmental discourses, but are features that have not traditionally been considered in great detail by users of CDA. Finally, Van Dijk (1993: 252) highlights how important it is for discourse analysts to take a socio-political stance in their research in order to express their views towards the text as well as society, but as Perrins (2019: 21-22) rightfully points out, this is difficult to achieve in CDA, so by combining this with ecolinguistics and/ or an ecosophy, it is possible. Therefore, it made logical sense to combine these two frameworks.

Although there are nine ways in which stories are revealed in Stibbe's framework, this research focused exclusively on four of these: frames and framings, identities, metaphors and evaluations. The decision was taken to focus exclusively on these four ways of revealing stories, rather than all nine of them, because ecolinguistics is *transdisciplinary* (Stibbe, 2021), meaning that different researchers have different ideas about the types of stories that are important to analyse. Likewise, they have different ideas about the types of discourse structure (i.e. way of revealing a story) that are worth analysing. For instance, this research examined how frames and framing can be used to downplay or obscure an individual or corporation's responsibility towards litter and plastic pollution, but considered such attempts to downplay or obscure one's role to be forms of erasure, meaning that this way of revealing

the stories-we-live-by was implicitly covered by the analysis of frames and framings and therefore did not require a section of its own. Framing can also be used to reveal ideologies (Lawson, 2001) which, again, meant that there was no need to analyse ideologies separately. Furthermore, it could be argued that Van Dijk's focus on mind-control is not dissimilar to Stibbe's focus on salience in the sense that salience is used to draw the text-receivers' attention to something (Stibbe, 2020: 160), whereas mind-control is when a text-producer signposts specific facts and information as though they are of significance to the text-receiver (Van Dijk, 2015). Likewise, the study of evaluations and appraisal patterns was considered to be of high importance because, evaluations are designed to inform the text-receiver about whether an issue is good or bad (Stibbe, 2020: 79) and can be used to shape public opinions, and eventually, behaviour (Stibbe, 2020: 79). They also reveal the ideological perspective of the text-producer (Stibbe, 2020) and society, giving the analysis the socio-political stance that Van Dijk (1993) believes is an essential part of CDA.

Whilst this research followed Van Dijk's approach, it could be claimed that it is a Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) since it explored how discourses of responsibility are socially-constructed by visual and semiotic modes of communication as well as grammatical, lexical and semantic structures. It also frequently used the words, "signify" and "signifies", which are synonymous with the field of semiotics (see Chandler, 2007 for instance) and Van Leeuwen's framework for analysing visual images (Van Leewen, 1996; 2004), which is a multimodal approach to CDA. Traditionally, users of Van Dijk's approach have not fully examined how meaning(s) is conveyed by visual and semiotic modes of communication, which makes this research unique in that it is one of few projects to analyse these fundamental discourse structures using Van Dijk's approach.

With regard to Stibbe's framework, it could be argued that this framework primarily *targets* and criticises the public (rather than corporations) for engaging in ecologically-destructive behaviours and practices, even though they have been led to assume that these are socially-acceptable and in some cases necessary. For instance, Stibbe frequently discusses the ideology that HUMANS ARE FUNDAMENTALLY SELFISH (Stibbe, 2015; 2020), but ignores the fact that individuals are often *encouraged* to engage in ecologically-destructive behaviours and practices through advertising and even government advice – such as, after the Covid-19 lockdowns when the public were urged to support the high street and go out shopping as though it was their civic duty (see BBC News, 2020 for instance). Therefore, this research

adapted Stibbe's framework to recognise that individuals are often misinformed or mislead by corporations about environmental issues.

Reference is also made to other cultural, political and social theories throughout the analysis, such as *social identity theory* (Tajfel, 1978) – which explores the relationship between individuals and the social groups that they are a part of (Brown, 2000: 746) (i.e. family, friends, workplace, hobbies, sports teams, education, school). This is because Stibbe's framework is a culmination of linguistic theories (Stibbe, 2020: 10), including *Critical Discourse Analysis* (Fairclough, 1989; 2015), *frame theory* (Lakoff & Wehling, 2012) and *appraisal theory* (Martin & White, 2005).This research also explored the concept of *interpellation* and how it can reveal stories about the responsibility of litter and plastic pollution. Interpellation occurs when a text-producer uses an ideology to recruit or 'hail upon' text-receivers to become a subject of a particular discourse (Althusser, 2001). This means that this project explored how the text-producer "recruits" the text-receiver to become a subject of the discourse of individual, collective or corporate responsibility.

4.4 The Stories of this Research

Applying the analytical and theoretical frameworks, the ecosophy and research aims/ questions, the analysis revealed a number of stories-we-live-by surrounding discourses of responsibility concerning litter and plastic pollution. At this juncture, it is important to reiterate that stories are different to ideologies, frames and narratives. As previously discussed, an ideology is a set of beliefs, attitudes or values that represents how people *think* and *feel* about a particular issues (Stibbe, 2020: 21) (i.e. they explain how the world was, is or should be). A frame is something that influences how text-receivers *perceive* a particular issue (Stibbe, 2020: 141). For instance, positive language choices may be used to describe plastic as a material that is good and not ecologically-destructive. A narrative is a sequence of logically-connected events that influences how text-receivers *understand* a particular issue (Stibbe, 2020: 182). In other words, describing plastic as a material that is bad leads the text-receiver to assume that it must be ecologically-destructive and therefore plastic pollution is problematic.

A recurring story in the analysis was that LITTERING IS BAD AND SOCIALLY-UNACCEPTABLE. Considering that the purpose of the analysis was to critique environmental campaign posters concerning litter and plastic pollution, it came as no surprise that littering was framed by the text-producer as careless and irresponsible behaviour that is frowned upon by society.

Likewise, the story that LITTER AND PLASTIC POLLUTION IS AN IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE THAT NEEDS ADDRESSING IMMEDIATELY urged the text-receiver to take appropriate and necessary action against this issue immediately in order to preserve animals, the environment, humans and nature. Moreover, the story that ANYBODY CAN (AND SHOULD) TACKLE LITTER POLLUTION challenged any underlying assumption that environmental issues can only be tackled by scientists and environmental experts (Moser & Dilling, 2011: 164). One of the most fascinating stories was that LITTERING IS A BLACK-AND-WHITE ISSUE because it perpetuated the ideology that *anything* can be litter. This challenged the underlying assumption that dropping natural objects, such as apple cores, does not count as littering because they easily and quickly biodegrade and urged the text-receiver to be more cautious whenever they are disposing of litter. The story that LITTER AND PLASTIC POLLUTION IS DESTROYING HUMAN HEALTH AS WELL AS THE ENVIRONMENT was also interesting because it reinforced the need to tackle this issue, not only for environmental purposes, but also for physical and mental health and wellbeing purposes.

Other stories were revealed by the analysis, but the above are examples of stories that were prevalent. The subsequent chapter will provide a full account of all of the stories that were revealed by the analysis.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

This section will address the ethical considerations surrounding this project. To ensure that this research fulfilled the Concordat to Support Research Integrity (Universities UK, 2022) and the UK Research Integrity's Office (UKRIO) (2022) Code of Practice for Research, both of which inform the York St. John University Research Ethics Policy (2021), the following steps were taken.

Firstly, prior to data collection, the project was approved by the School of Education, Language & Psychology Research Ethics Committee (SREC) at York St. John University, and the approval code is RECLL00033. This met the University's requirement that *all* research projects must be approved by the relevant School Ethics Committee, *before* any data is collected. Additionally, projects considered to be of high-risk (i.e. those working with the NHS, vulnerable groups or those dealing with sensitive topics) may be subject to further scrutiny from the University Research Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee (UREISC). However, the School Ethics Committee did not consider this project to be of high-risk, meaning that it did not require the approval of the UREISC.

The Policy also states that researchers *must* obtain and record the informed consent of any direct participants *before* any research is carried out. However, since this research involved the linguistic analysis of posters, which are publicly available to view, download and print from the internet, and are classed as secondary data, no direct participants were involved and so there was no need to obtain or record informed consent. The Policy also suggests that researchers take into consideration any indirect participants that may be involved, such as, the author of a text, when applying observational methodologies, like text and discourse-analytic approaches. In the context of this research, the individual authors of the posters, which may be considered indirect participants, have been omitted and the name of the organisation – Keep Britain Tidy – of which the authors would/ would have been employed by, has been cited instead.

CHAPTER 5 ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide a critical analysis of the posters according to the analytical and theoretical frameworks, ecosophy, research aims and questions (R.Q.s), which, to reiterate, are as follows:

R.Q. 1 How are discourses of responsibility socially-constructed in environmental campaign posters concerning litter and plastic pollution?

R.Q. 2 Who is responsible for litter and plastic pollution in the posters?

R.Q. 3 Have discourses of responsibility surrounding litter and plastic pollution evolved over time?

R.Q. 4 How can ecolinguistics/ Eco-Critical Discourse Analysis be used to reveal new stories-we-live-by?

It will compare the similarities and differences between and within the data sets and focus on four ways of revealing the stories-we-live-by: frames and framings, metaphors, evaluations and identities Throughout the chapter, the benefits of combining CDA with ecolinguistics as a means of exposing and challenging the stories-we-live-by will be considered in the hope that this inspires future research within the field.

5.2 Frames and Framings

Across Data Set A, the second-persons, "you", "your" and "you're", are used to generate a discourse of individual responsibility where the text-receiver is held exclusively accountable and to blame for litter pollution. In other words, they activate the frame that INDIVIDUALS ARE RESPONSIBLE AND TO BLAME FOR LITTER AND PLASTIC POLLUTION, rather than the manufacturers of single-use plastic and other non-recyclable materials and the government, which regulate the types of material that can be manufactured and sold. The personal pronouns interpellate the text-receiver as a subject of the discourse of individual responsibility in the hope that holding them exclusively accountable and to blame for this issue will encourage them to take their litter home with them, recycle and utilise litter bins. From the text-producer's perspective, it is expected that the text-receiver will engage in these behaviours and practices in order to avoid a fine of up to £100 (UK Government, 1971). It

could be argued that framing the text-receiver as liable and to blame for litter pollution is a form of *manipulation* because the text-producer frames the text-receiver as liable and to blame for litter pollution to, albeit unintentionally, perhaps, disguise or cover-up the fact that larger corporations are causing the majority of the damage. This act of manipulation is a type of erasure in the form of the mask because the story that LITTER POLLUTION IS AN IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE is shared, but in an unconventional manner.

In Data Set B, the second-person pronouns ("you", "your"), first-person pronoun ("me") and inclusive pronoun ("we're") generate a discourse of collective responsibility, where both the text-producer *and* the text-receiver are held accountable and to blame for litter and plastic pollution. This motivates the text-receiver to engage in collective action responses, such as litter-picking, recycling and reducing single-use plastic consumption, because they are informed that tackling litter pollution is everybody's responsibility. Gulliver *et al*. (2020) found that environmentalist images empowered collective action responses to environmental issues, however, in Data Set B, it appears that personal pronouns empower collective action responses instead because they frame the text-producer and the text-receiver as collectively responsible for litter and plastic pollution, thus perpetuating the ideology that EVERYBODY MUST WORK TOGETHER TO TACKLE LITTER AND PLASTIC POLLUTION, which, in turn, increases the likelihood of public compliance with litter and plastic pollution-related laws.

Moreover, Fairclough and Wodak (1997) studied the use of pronouns in a series of speeches given by former British prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, and suggested that Thatcher used the pronoun, "we", in order to sound more inclusive and create the impression that she stood in solidarity with the British public. In Data Set B, "we" creates the impression that KBT are working alongside the public to try and tackle this issue.

In both of the data sets, the frame that INDIVIDUALS ARE LIABLE FOR LITTER AND PLASTIC POLLUTION is not unusual and would have been expected by the text-receiver. This is because, as previously mentioned, environmental campaign groups are renowned for emphasising the importance of individual actions, such as turning off lights, which as mentioned in Chapter 1 of the thesis, leads individuals to assume that personal actions go a lot further than they actually do (Stibbe, 2020: 143). However, had the text-producer have used the first-person pronoun, "I", then this would have involved re-framing the discourse of responsibility, since this contrasts cultural and social expectations surrounding the responsibility of litter and plastic pollution – this is an example of frame modification.

In Data Set A, present-tense verbs, such as "is", "isn't", "be", "can", "put", "save", "contact", "take", "keep", "cherish" and "get rid", activate the frame LITTER POLLUTION IS A CURRENT AFFAIR. The use of present-tense verbs is another example of frame modification because, during the 1960s and 70s, environmental issues were often framed by scientists and journalists as distant problems that the current generation did not need to worry about. For instance, in 1969, Stanford University biologist, Paul Ehrlich, predicted that the UK would not exist by the year 2000 and would instead simply consist of "a small group of impoverished islands, inhabited by some 70 million hungry people" (Ehrlich, 1969). The fact that this prediction was made twenty-nine years before the year 2000 would have probably lead the audience to assume that they have plenty of time to act; thus activating the frame that this is not an urgent issue that needs resolving immediately. Contrastingly, in Data Set A, the present-tense verbs tell the story that LITTER POLLUTION IS AN IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE THAT NEEDS ADDRESSING IMMEDIATELY. In other words, they re-frame ecologically-responsible behaviours and practices, such as litter-picking and recycling, as cultural and social practices (i.e. new stories-to-live-by that inspire individuals to preserve the environment), which simultaneously increases salience towards litter pollution as an important environmental issue.

In an ecolinguistic analysis of the *Nintendo DS Game, Animal Crossing: New Leaf*, Poole and Sprangler (2020) revealed that the game legitimises ecologically-responsible behaviours, identities and practices by re-framing them as cultural and social norms or expectations. For instance, gamers were required to donate used or unwanted items to a recycling shop (Poole & Sprangler, 2020). With regard to Data Set A, the text-producer uses present-tense verbs to re-frame litter pollution as a BATTLE THAT SOCIETY IS CURRENTLY FIGHTING AS OPPOSED TO ONE THAT THE MAY ENCOUNTER IN THE FUTURE. Consequently, this frames engaging in ecologically-responsible behaviours and practices, such as litter-picking and recycling, as IMPERATIVE TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE PRESENT MOMENT IN TIME AND THE FUTURE, but also appear less radical. Present-tense verbs also increase the *modality* (i.e. it informs the text-receiver that litter pollution is a real and current issue (Machin & Mayr, 2012: 13)) of the posters because they inform the text-receiver that this is not just an assumption or the text-producers' own, personal opinion: litter pollution really is having a detrimental impact on the environment at the present moment in time. Furthermore, Van Dijk (2008b: 182) states that the use of commands, recommendations and requests, can indicate a duty or moral obligation that the text-receiver should/ must fulfil. In other words,

present-tense verbs, such as "can", "could" and "contact", inform the text-receiver that they must do whatever they can to tackle litter pollution immediately.

Similarly, in Data Set B, present-tense verbs evoke the frame that LITTER AND PLASTIC POLLUTION IS AN IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE WHICH NEEDS TACKLING IMMEDIATELY. For instance, "costs", "takes", "support", "it's", "spread", "dispose", "protect", "limit", "walk", "join", "find", "put", emphasise the need for immediate action, thus encouraging the text-receiver to engage in ecologically-responsible behaviours and practices, such as recycling and reducing single-use plastic consumption. Arguably, the present-tense verbs tell a beneficial story (i.e. they transform humanity's relationship with the natural environmental) (Stibbe, 2020: 3) about society becoming more ecologically-conscious and aware of the severity of environmental issues, such as litter and plastic pollution, and recognising the need to preserve the natural environment for present and future generations. They also inform the text-receiver that litter and plastic pollution is not only bad for the environment, but also for the economy, because it "takes" time and "costs" money to resolve.

Once again, this exophoric reference to money is an example of frame modification since it does not match the socially-accepted discourse of business and economics. Traditionally, references to business, finance or the economy in ecological and environmental discourses have been considered ecologically-destructive since these legitimise activities, such as overconsumption (Stibbe, 2020). For instance, Stibbe (2020: 39) explained how in an article published by *The Guardian* newspaper (see Blight, 2012), which interviewed a variety of public figures and asked them to express their opinions about climate change, the Director of Virgin Earth Challenge, Alan Lucas, proposed that sustainability should be re-framed as "the biggest supply chain challenge yet". Stibbe argued that such proposals activate the frame that BUSINESS AND CONSUMERISM IS MORE IMPORTANT THAT THE ENVIRONMENT, which contrasts the socially-accepted discourse of sustainability (Stibbe, 2020). In the context of Data Set A, the reference to money is appropriate because it is used to *deter* the text-receiver from littering and fly-tipping. Relating to the ecosophy of this research, the use of present-tense verbs could be praised because they promote a beneficial story that emphasises the need to preserve the environment at the present moment in time and for the benefit of future generations by revealing the story that LITTER POLLUTION IS AN IMPORTANT ISSUE THAT NEEDS TACKLING.

However, in Data Set A, the frame that LITTER POLLUTION IS AN IMPORTANT ISSUE WHICH NEEDS ADDRESSING IMMEDIATELY is somewhat restricted by vague and ambiguous

statements. The problem with vague and ambiguous statements is that they are left open to interpretation, which can lead text-receivers to build assumptions about a particular issue (Lakoff, 1970). With regard to Data Set A, the statement, "Contact the council to get rid of any large items", is ambiguous because it is unclear what the text-producer means by "large items". Consequently, the text-receiver is less likely to "contact the council", not because they do not care about this issue, but because they are simply unaware of what does and does not constitute a "large item". In other words, the text-producer does not quantify how "large" an "item" must be to justify contacting "the council", but equally, they do not specify the kinds of "item" that may be eligible for collection.

Meanwhile, the word, "Tidy", is repeated multiple times throughout the data set and "litter" is repeated three times. Van Dijk (2015) would argue that the repetition of "Tidy" and "litter" reminds the text-receiver (i.e. signposts them to the fact) that keeping "Britain Tidy" is a fundamental part of preserving the environment. However, once again, the text-producer presupposes that the text-receiver already knows what they mean by "litter" or keeping "Britain Tidy", which impedes the text-receiver's ability to respond to the discourse (i.e. behave in an ecologically-responsible manner) and "Keep Britain Tidy". Whilst there are images of litter throughout the data set, such as a drinks can, paint can, paper, armchair, the text-producer could have been more specific about what they mean by keeping "Britain Tidy" and perhaps provided some images that showcase some examples of items that might be classed as litter in order to ensure that their goal (i.e. to tackle litter pollution) is achieved. The word, "Tidy" is also left open to interpretation because, for some people, "Tidy" might mean not dropping any litter at all, whilst for others, natural items such as apple cores - which easily and quickly biodegrade - might not be a cause for concern and part of keeping "Britain Tidy".

Although there are fewer vague and ambiguous statements in Data Set B, words and phrases, such as "dumped waste", "fly-tipping", "littering" and "rubbish" fail to inform the text-receiver about what does and does not constitute ecologically-responsible behaviour. In other words, "dumped waste", "fly-tipping", "littering" and "rubbish" could mean one thing to one individual and a completely different thing to another. However, words and phrases, such as "poo" and "PPE gloves and masks", which are accompanied by clear photographs of drinks cans, tyres, sofas, washing machines, inform the text-receiver about the types of object that might typically be classified as "rubbish" or "littering". This enables the text-receiver to

behave in an ecologically-responsible manner and ultimately "Keep Britain Tidy" because they are acutely aware of what does and does not constitute "littering".

The use of vague and ambiguous statements as an attempt to raise awareness of litter and plastic pollution and encourage environmentally-conscious behaviours and practices may be criticised, according the ecosophy, because the ecosophy highlights that litter and plastic pollution should be tackled in order to preserve animals, the natural environment, health and wellbeing and achieve social justice. However, since it is unclear *how* the text-receiver should address this issue, then clearly this frame is not fulfilling its purpose.

Figure 5.2.1 *'Litter isn't much fun when you're only 5ft 1'* poster by Keep Britain Tidy
[Photograph courtesy of Phelps, S.]

Elsewhere, the declarative statement, "Litter isn't much fun when you're only 5ft 1" (see Figure 5.2.1), tells the story that LITTER POLLUTION IS GETTING WORSE and once again activates the frame that LITTER POLLUTION IS AN IMPORTANT ISSUE WHICH NEEDS ADDRESSING IMMEDIATELY. Somebody or something that is "5ft 1" is not very tall, so this

entails that litter pollution as an ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE THAT IS BECOMING OF HEIGHTENED CONCERN AND WILL ONLY GET WORSE, which alerts the text-receiver that litter pollution is overwhelming the environment and that they must do whatever they can to reduce litter pollution in order to preserve the environment. Within the poster, is a photograph of the comedian Ronnie Corbett, who was one half of the popular 1970s comedy duo, *The Two Ronnies* (BBC Comedy, 2014), being buried amongst a pile of abandoned rubbish. Corbett was known for being short and many of the jokes made by Ronnie Barker, the other half of the duo, revolved around Corbett's height (BBC Comedy, 2014). By positioning Corbett amongst a pile of rubbish, alerts the text-receiver of just how big the problem of litter pollution is becoming (i.e. there is so much litter that if it were piled high, it would be as tall as a person).

The words "fun" and "5ft 1" also generate a half-rhyme, which Van Dijk (2008a) would argue creates a more memorable experience for the text-receiver that they store in their episodic (i.e. personal) memory as a mental model and are reminded of whenever they are faced with a similar situation in future.

Figure 5.2.2 *It's still littering* poster by Centre for Social Innovation

In Figure 5.2.2, the depiction of a drinks can, polystyrene food container and plastic drinks bottle and repetition of the word "littering" frames "littering" as *the* salient issue in the poster, when, in reality, the mass consumption of single-use plastic and non-recyclable materials is far more ecologically-destructive. In other words, it erases the fact that the consumption of single-use plastic and non-recyclable materials is far more ecologically-destructive and placing it into a void – where it is important, but not as important as "littering". Consequently, this misinforms the text-receiver that the mass consumption of single-use plastic and other non-recyclable materials is not as ecologically-destructive as "littering". It could also be argued that this is a form of greenwashing since it misleads the text-receiver

(Furlow, 2010) into assuming that it is socially-acceptable to consume quantities of single-use plastic and non-recyclable packaging, so long as this is disposed of appropriately. Whilst "littering" *is* a salient issue (and so it therefore comes as no surprise that KBT campaign against this issue) it is unusual that this has been framed as *the* salient issue in the poster or *more salient* than the consumption of single-use plastic and other non-recyclable materials and is thus another example of frame modification.

Figure 5.2.3 *Join the Great British Spring Clean* poster by Keep Britain Tidy

The use of bright, natural colours in Figure 5.2.3 re-frames litter-picking (and tackling litter pollution more generally) as an exciting and productive activity; challenging any underlying assumption that litter-picking and tackling litter pollution is a boring and arduous task. These colours interpellate individuals that enjoy being outdoors and being surrounded by nature, allowing the text-producer to 'recruit' potential attendees for these events. They also signify that by attending these events, individuals are helping to preserve the natural environment and create a brighter future so that people can continue to enjoy these natural spaces and being outdoors for years and decades to come. The choice of colours also helps to increase the modality of the poster and enables the text-producer to appeal to a wider audience, beyond those who enjoy being outdoors and surrounded by nature. Semioticians have found that legal and financial documents, such as invoices, that are printed in a bright colour are 30% more likely to be paid on time than those that have been printed in black and white

(Lacy, 1996), meaning that the poster is more likely to stand-out against anti-littering posters that may be printed in black and white.

However, the use of temporal references, including dates and time, may be criticised according to the ecosophy because the specified time frame for the event ("22nd March to 23rd April 2019") implies that litter-picking is only necessary at this particular time of the year. Whilst this *does* encourage individuals to get involved and support the campaign, it is possible that after "23rd April 2019", the text-receiver will completely forget about litter-picking and resort back to their old – and potentially ecologically-destructive habits.

With regard to Stibbe's framework, the use of the temporal reference is an example of erasure in the form of the void because the story that LITTER AND PLASTIC POLLUTION IS AN IMPORTANT ISSUE THAT NEEDS ADDRESSING IMMEDIATELY is promoted, but in a somewhat unconventional manner. In other words, the text-producer frames litter and plastic pollution as a salient issue that needs tackling, but only between "22nd March and 23rd April".

5.3 Metaphors
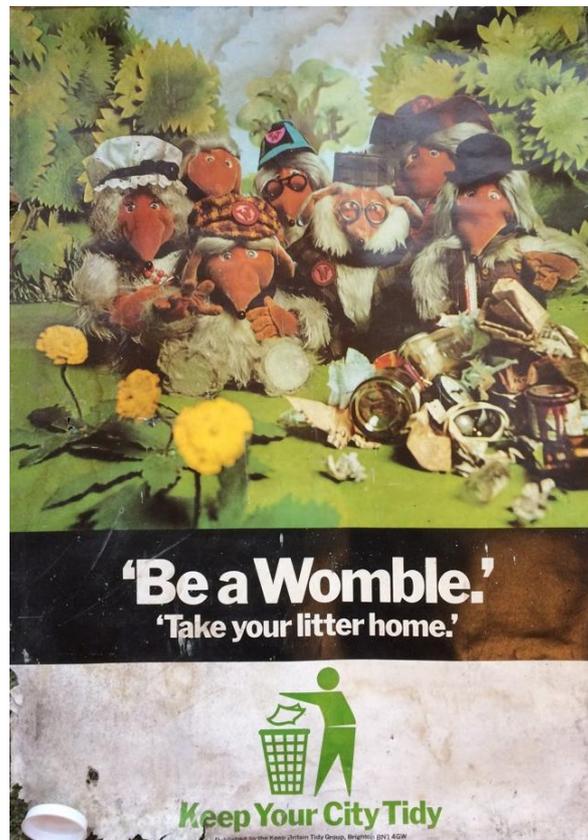
Figure 5.3.1 *'Be a Womble'. 'Take your litter home'* poster by Keep Britain Tidy

In Figure 5.3.1, the metaphor, "Be a womble", promotes the story that LITTER POLLUTION IS AN IMPORTANT ISSUE WHICH NEEDS ADDRESSING. Consequently, this portrays the popular children's television characters as role models and standards to look up to. On this occasion, the target frame of the metaphor is *The Wombles*[2], whilst the source frame is engaging in ecologically-responsible behaviours and practices, including litter-picking and recycling. In other words, the text-producer does not expect the text-receiver to literally walk, talk and dress like "a Womble", but they do expect them to partake in the same altruistic behaviours and practices that The Wombles were renowned for engaging in. At the time of publication, The Wombles were famous for their work on tackling litter pollution (see BBC News, 1998), meaning that it was highly-likely that text-receivers would have been more willing to follow their advice and engage in these behaviours and practices than they would if another well-known celebrity actor of the time - for instance, David Bowie - had been deployed to encourage these behaviours and practices because they are directly involved in addressing environmental issues. Furthermore, the metaphor is represented as a quotation, portraying The Wombles as authoritative, trustworthy and knowledgeable characters that the text-receiver can rely on for environmental advice and guidance (Van Dijk, 1988).

Alternatively, the metaphor constructs a positive social identity for individuals that dispose of litter responsibly and / or engage in environmental behaviours and practices, which serves to persuade the text-receiver to perform these social identities in order to preserve the environment, but also be viewed positively by wider society – like The Wombles. "Be" is also an imperative verb which, once again, signifies that the text-receiver *must* engage in these behaviours and practices (i.e. they have a duty or moral obligation to engage in these environmental behaviours and practices) (Van Dijk, 2008b: 182).

On the one hand, the metaphor may inspire the text-receiver to attend litter-picking events in their local area and help to preserve the environment because The Wombles are portrayed as positive role models and standards to look up to - and so, therefore, logically, must be doing the right and moral thing. On the other hand, it could be argued that the metaphor frames The Wombles as heroes and litter-picking as a heroic act, when actually, it is something that the text-receiver should not have to do because nobody should be littering in the first place. In other words, the text-producer erases the idea that the text-receiver has a duty or obligation to

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[2] Created by Elisabeth Beresford in 1968, The Wombles are a group of anthropomorphised, burrowing animals that featured in a series of children's novels and a television series during the mid-1970's in order to educate children about the importance of litter-picking and recycling (BBC News, 1998).

litter-pick and recycle, places it into a void and re-frames it as something that the text-receiver may wish to consider partaking in during their spare time.

Figure 5.3.2 *"The pollution problem is in our hands. Keep Britain Tidy"* poster by Keep Britain Tidy

In Figure 5.3.2, the metaphor, "The pollution problem is in our hands", activates the frame that the EFFECTS OF LITTER POLLUTION ARE REVERSABLE, PROVIDED THAT TEXT-RECEIVER BEHAVES IN AN ECOLOGICALLY-RESPONSIBLE MANNER. Here, the target frame is *tackling litter pollution* and the source frame is that this is a *manageable task*. The metaphor is in the present-tense which, once again, informs the text-receiver that they must take action immediately in order to resolve this issue. Additionally, "in our hands" entails that litter pollution is not an enormous problem to solve, because if something fits "in our hands", then

it cannot be that big or overwhelming, implying that litter pollution can be controlled and contained (i.e. it is something that can be prevented). One the one hand, it could be argued that this downplays the severity of the situation and trivialises litter pollution, but it could also be argued that by re-framing tackling litter pollution as a more manageable task, the metaphor inspires the text-receiver to take control of the situation since they are led to assume that their individual and collective actions are more meaningful and worthwhile than they may initially assume. It also reminds the text-receiver that they *can* turn the tide on ecologically-destructive ways of living and discover new stories-to-live-by that preserve the environment, but only if they behave in an ecologically-responsible manner and are determined to improve. Similar to use the use of present-tense verbs across Data Set B (see page 64), the metaphor generates a discourse of collective responsibility, since "Our" entails that the text-producer and text-receiver are *equally* liable for litter pollution and thus responsible for resolving this issue.

The metaphor is also non-assertive or accusatory. Previous research has found that individuals who are less interested or concerned by environmental issues often respond better to non-assertive statements in environmental discourses because they are gentler and do not make the text-receiver feel as though they are being lectured or forced to behave in a particular way (Kronrod, Grinstein & Watheiu, 2012; Hyun Baek, Yoon & Kim, 2015). Therefore, the metaphor persuades individuals with little interest in tackling litter pollution to get involved as it makes this seem like an achievable and less arduous task, but also does not lecture the text-receiver. This could be praised according to the ecosophy because the text-receiver is encouraged to participate in ecologically-responsible behaviours and practices in a more engaging and accessible manner.

The word "pollution" activates the frame that litter pollution – whilst reversable - is a far more serious issue than the text-receiver might assume because "pollution" is a word that has connotations with problems that are overwhelming or ruining something. This motivates the text-receiver to take action of the situation because litter is re-framed as a more salient issue, rather than a minor inconvenience.

Contextually, the metaphor is shown to be spoken by musician, singer and songwriter, Mark Bolan, who helped to kick-start the glam rock movement in the early 1970s with his band, *T. Rex* (Peraino, 2006: 229). By asking a well-known and well-liked public figure to endorse the campaign, KBT are able to share this important message (i.e. that litter pollution *can* be

tackled) with a wider audience, including glam rock and T. Rex fans who may not have been concerned about litter pollution in the past. It also interpellates fans of T. Rex and the glam rock movement and encourages them to collectively take action and control of the situation.

Figure 5.3.3 *'Contact the council to get rid of any large items'* poster by Keep Britain Tidy

Much like conceptual metaphors (Van Dijk, 2014: 28), visual metaphors are also deployed to re-shape the text-receivers' perceptions of litter pollution. For instance, the armchair that Ronnie Corbett[3] is sitting on (Figure 5.3.3) depicts how litter can comprise of larger household items, such as furniture and electrical appliances; challenging any underlying assumptions that littering simply involves irresponsibly discarding smaller and

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[3] As one half of the famous double-act, *The Two Ronnies*, Ronnie Corbett was one of Britain's most popular comedians and during the 1970s, was renowned for telling jokes in a large armchair whilst wearing a suit (BBC Comedy, 2014).

(stereotypically) food and drink-related items (i.e. food and drink packaging, such as drinks bottles and cans, polystyrene containers and crisp packets). The armchair dominates the poster and is much larger than Corbett himself which, in complete contrast to "The pollution problem is in our hands" metaphor in Figure 5.2.3, entails that litter pollution is becoming uncontrollable. Furthermore, the armchair, although in a poor, aesthetic condition, looks repairable and in good working condition, which may encourage the text-receiver to consider alternatives to landfill. For instance, they could donate items furniture to a charity shop or have it restored. Put simply, the metaphor reveals a new story-to-live-by, where individuals think twice about littering or fly-tipping; not only because it is destroying the environment, but also because these "large items" can often be repaired and re-sold. Earlier, I explained how Poole and Sprangler (2020) (see page 17) discovered that *Animal Crossing: New Leaf* legitimises ecologically-conscious behaviours, practices and identities, such as donating used or unwanted items to the recycling shop. In the context of Figure 5.3.2, the text-producer encourages the text-receiver to "Contact the council to get rid of large items" so that unwanted items of furniture can be recycled or given another lease of life, rather than taken to landfill.

Figure 5.3.4*"Flicking blue murder"* poster by Keep Britain Tidy

By contrast, fewer metaphors are used in Data Set B. However, the metaphor, "Flicking blue murder" likens individuals that drop litter to serious criminals (i.e. killers) because they are destroying marine ecosystems as a result of beach litter and plastic ending up in the ocean and getting consumed by marine life - hence "blue murder" because "blue" is the colour of the ocean, which is where marine animals live. The word, "murder", has connotations with killing, death and evil, which simultaneously increases the severity of litter and plastic pollution. In other words, it compares the act of littering to that of killing a human being. Moreover, "murder" involves the deliberate killing of an individuals as opposed to an accidental or natural death, which informs the text-receiver that such consequences can be avoided, if they are careful and think about their actions. The metaphor is complemented by an image of a seal swimming around used cigarette butts which educates the text-receiver about the lifecycle of litter (particularly cigarette butts) and the detrimental impact that this has on marine ecosystems - because once it is in the ocean, it stays in the ocean. Cigarette butts are relatively small, so the text-receiver might assume that they are not problematic, even though research has estimated that they are the most commonly littered item and were found on 79% of the 7,200 sites surveyed in 2014/ 15 (Keep Britain Tidy, 2018). Therefore, this challenges the assumption that cigarette butts are too small to be classed as part of litter and plastic pollution and reinforces the story that ANY ITEM, LARGE OR SMALL, CAN BE CLASSED AS LITTER, if it has been discarded by an individual in a public space. Once again, this is a form of mind control (Van Dijk, 2015) in that it makes the text-receiver to think that anybody who drops a cigarette is a bad, selfish and immoral individual who deserves to be in prison, which motivates those who smoke to use an ashtray and put their cigarette butts in the bin.

5.4 Evaluations

Throughout Data Set A, the evaluation that LITTERING IS IRRESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOUR is communicated by a negative appraisal pattern (see Table 5.4.1). Once again, this tells the story that LITTERING IS BAD AND SOCIALLY-UNACCEPTABLE, which, in turn, encourages the text-receiver to engage in ecologically-responsible behaviours and practices, such as litter-picking and recycling.

Table 5.4.1 Negative appraisal pattern, Data Set A

Offensive	Offence
Get rid	Unwanted
Dirty	Dirty ol'
Isn't much fun	Problem
Pollution	

Within this appraisal pattern, the word, "offence", warns the text-receiver that littering is not only unnecessary and inconvenient, but also against the law. This challenges any underlying assumption that the text-receiver may have about littering not being as serious as other environmental issues and motivates them to engage in ecologically-responsible behaviours and practices in order to avoid being viewed as irresponsible by wider society.

The words, "offensive", "get rid" and "isn't much fun", emphasise that littering is unpleasant, but also remind the text-receiver that littering is not all "fun" and games because (a) it is damaging the environment and (b) somebody has to be employed to clear it up. For instance, "offensive" implies that littering is irresponsible because it upsets, angers and hurts somebody or something, which might make the text-receiver feel guilty about their littering habits. Similarly, "get rid" entails that littering is a nuisance as these words are commonly attributed to bugs, pests, insects or even an illness or virus. Consequently, this enables the text-receiver to consider these inconveniences in an everyday context and realise that littering is just as bad.

It could also be argued that the words, "isn't much fun", interpellate a younger audience (i.e. teenagers and young adults) who may be more likely to prioritise their social life and having "fun" over preserving the environment because they are not acutely aware of the environmental impact of their behaviour. Manika *et al*. (2019) found that university students were often oblivious to environmental issues and assumed that they could consume as much electricity as possible in their student accommodation without consequence due to their being no or few financial penalties. Therefore, the interpellation directly addresses a younger audience and informs them that whilst litter-picking "isn't much fun", having to deal with the environmental consequences of litter pollution is even worse.

The words, "dirty ol' man" (see Figure 5.4.2), carry two, alternative meanings. On the one hand, they tell a story about the social identities of litterers because "dirty ol' man" is a slur that is commonly attributed to sexual offenders, which compares litterers to serious criminals. However, the poster features television characters, Albert and Harold Steptoe (played by Wilfrid Brambell and Harry H. Corbett) from the British sitcom, *Steptoe & Son*, which was aired by the BBC between 1962 and 1965 (BBC, 2022). The sitcom portrayed the differences in attitudes and behaviour between father and son, with Albert (father) characterising a rather undesirable, elderly man who is resistant to change and set in his ways and Harold (son) portraying a younger and more forward-thinking man with aspirations (BBC, 2022). A 1970s audience would have most likely been familiar with the sitcom and would have perhaps wanted to be perceived as more like Harold than Albert, meaning that they were likely to respond to the command of "Don't be a dirty ol' man" and clean-up after themselves in order to be viewed by wider society as moral, forward-thinking and aspirational, like Harold.

Figure 5.4.2 *"Don't be a dirty ol' man. Keep Britain Tidy."* Poster by Keep Britain Tidy [Photograph courtesy of Classic British TV]

Overall, this negative appraisal pattern helps to reinforce societal expectations that individuals have a personal duty to dispose of litter responsibly (i.e. by putting it in a bin, recycling it or taking it home with them), and they should fulfil this duty not only to avoid financial consequences and being viewed as irresponsible, but also to preserve the environment.

When Stibbe (2019) examined the role of positive appraisal patterns in meteorological and travel agent discourses, he discovered that they generated a destructive, *pseudo-satisfier discourse* that almost encouraged individuals to engage in ecologically-destructive behaviours and practices (i.e. travelling abroad by aeroplane) due to presuppositions that these experiences will improve their quality of life. By contrast, in Data Set A, the negative appraisal pattern persuades individuals to engage in ecologically-conscious behaviours and practices (i.e. litter-picking and recycling) because they are led to assume that littering is bad and something that must be stopped.

Meanwhile, in Data Set B, the evaluation that LITTER AND PLASTIC POLLUTION IS AN URGENT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE THAT NEEDS TACKLING is communicated by a negative appraisal pattern (see Table 5.4.3).

Table 5.4.3 Negative appraisal pattern, Data Set B

Time	Money
Bugs	Blue murder
Poison	Chemicals
Stretched like never before	Costs
Spread	Limit
Dumped	Thoughtless
Tosser	

The illness-related jargon ("bugs", "spread" and "limit") compare litter and plastic pollution to a highly-transmissible disease or virus, like Covid-19, which activates the frame that LITTER AND PLASTIC POLLUTION IS A GLOBAL HEALTH EMERGENCY THAT MUST BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY. Considering that, at the time of publication, the text-receiver was experiencing a global pandemic – which continues to have an extremely negative impact on people's lives and livelihoods – the use of illness-related jargon urges the text-receiver to take more personal responsibility for their own, individual actions in order to prevent litter and plastic

pollution from escalating into a global pandemic of its own. Furthermore, over the past two years, society has focused its attention on tackling the virus by developing vaccines, self-isolating and following social distancing guidelines and much of society has been willing to do whatever they can to reduce the spread of the virus (Stibbe, 2020 vii). Therefore, the text-producer uses the illness-related jargon to urge the text-receiver to take litter and plastic pollution as seriously as Covid-19.

On the other hand, the words "time", "money", "stretched like never before", "costs", "dumped", "thoughtless" and "tosser", remind the text-receiver that littering is inconsiderate and a financial burden because somebody has to be employed to clear after up afterwards. In particular, "time", "money", "costs" and "stretched like never before", entail that litter-picking is a laborious and time-consuming exercise, which pleads the text-receiver to take necessary steps to prevent litter and plastic pollution from spiralling out of control. The words, "dumped", "thoughtless" and "tosser", generate a negative social identity for litterers and portrays such individuals as selfish and disrespectful human beings who assume that other individuals are responsible for clearing up after them.

5.5 Identities
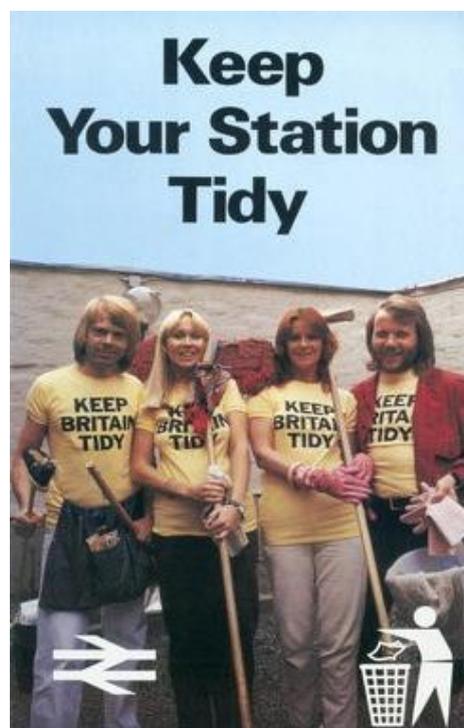
Figure 5.5.1 *Keep your station tidy* poster by Keep Britain Tidy

In Figure 5.5.1, the Swedish popular music group, ABBA[4], are depicted as role models to challenge the assumption that, in order to preserve the environment and make informed decisions about environmental issues, individuals must possess a certain degree of scientific and environmental knowledge (Moser & Dilling, 2011: 164). They also challenge any underlying assumption that celebrity culture can be ecologically-destructive, due to the amount of time celebrities spend travelling around the world in private jets, buying new outfits and spending lots of money, because they are depicted as litter-picking at a local railway station. This not only legitimises these behaviours and practices, but also activates the frame that TACKLING LITTER POLLUTION IS A COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY THAT EVERYBODY, REGARDLESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL KNOWLEDGE, INTERESTS, WEALTH OR OCCUPATION, SHOUD COME TOGETHER TO ADDRESS. This promotes the story that LITTER POLLUTION IS AN IMPORTANT ISSUE WHICH NEEDS ADDRESSING because ABBA are taking time out of their busy, celebrity work schedule to tackle this issue and urge the text-receiver to "Keep [their] Station Tidy".

ABBA's objective (to "Keep Britain Tidy") is not motivated by their own, personal interests, but the interests of wider society. In discourse-analytic research, this is known as *legitimisation through altruism* (Reyes, 2011: 137). In Figure 5.5.1, ABBA's objective is legitimised by the name of the campaign group, "Keep Britain Tidy", which is printed onto the t-shirts that they are wearing, because "Britain" is a collective noun that re-frames litter-picking - and tackling litter pollution more generally - as a national responsibility that everybody living in England, Scotland and Wales must collectively address.

From the perspective of social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978) – for which Stibbe's ecolinguistic framework is part inspired by (Stibbe, 2020: 10) - it could be argued that "Britain" generates in-group/ out-group differentiation between the text-producer and the text-receiver because it motivates the text-receiver to engage in the ecologically-responsible behaviour and practices (i.e. litter-picking) that are being performed by ABBA in the poster. Consequently, ABBA and individuals that dispose of litter responsibly and/ or attend litter-picking events maintain a positive social identity and are members of the *in-group*, whilst litterers and those that do not care about the environment maintain a negative social identity and are members of the *out-group* (Tajfel, 1978).

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[4] Formed in 1972 by Agnetha Faltskog, Bjorn Ulvaeus, Benny Andersson and Anni-Frid Lyngstad, ABBA are a Swedish pop group that had several top-10 singles in the UK charts during the 1970s, including *Waterloo*, *Mamma Mia!*, *Dancing Queen* and *Take a Chance on Me* (see ABBA: The Official Site, 2022).

The t-shirts that ABBA are wearing are yellow - as is the t-shirt worn by David Cassidy[5] in Figure 5.5.2 (see below). On the one hand, this choice of colour could signify an act of *resistance* (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004) because the colour green has associations with environmentalist identities for which the text-receiver may be reluctant to perform, due to underlying assumptions (which are often perpetuated by the media) that such social identities are extremist, restrictive or overzealous. For instance, Atanasova and Koteyko (2016) examined the discursive construction of environmental activist identities in British newspapers and found that terms, such as "righteous zealots", "eager evangelists", "unreasoning mob" and "excessively extreme" were used to portray activists. With regard to Figures 5.5.1 and 5.5.2, the depiction of non-environmental and non-expert actors re-frames tackling litter pollution - and environmental issues more generally - as something that is straightforward and accessible, meaning that, once again, the assumption that tackling environmental issues, such as litter pollution, requires scientific or environmental knowledge (Moller & Dilling, 2011: 164) is challenged.
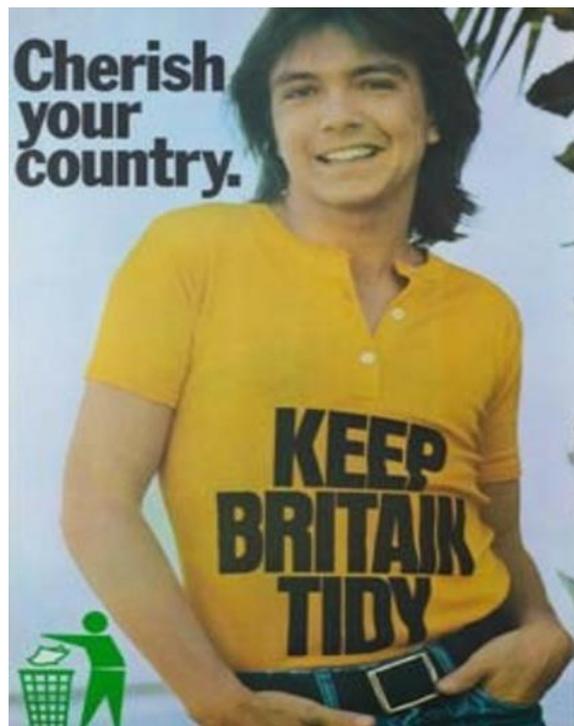
Figure 5.5.2 *Cherish your country* poster by Keep Britain Tidy

It could also be argued that the colour yellow depicts litter-picking as an activity as opposed to an identity. In other words, the text-producer informs the text-receiver that they have a

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[5] David Cassidy was an American actor, singer, songwriter and guitarist, best known for his role as Keith Partridge in the popular musical sitcom, *The Partridge Family*, which aired from 1970 to 1974.

personal and collective duty to "Keep [their] Station Tidy" and "Keep Britain Tidy", without actually referring to the environment. This enables KBT to appeal to a wider audience because litter-picking is re-framed as an activity that is unrelated to the environment and litter-pickers as unrelated to environmental activists. Alternatively, this choice of colour may be unintentional and simply a result of the fact that yellow was a fashionable colour during the 1970s. Nonetheless, the use of non-environmental colours may be praised according to the ecosophy (see Section 3.7) because even though these colours are not intended to signify that litter pollution is an environmental issue, they still encourage the text-receiver to engage in ecologically-responsible behaviours and practices, such as litter-picking and recycling, albeit more subtly, in order to tackle litter pollution and preserve the environment.

The fact that ABBA urge the text-receiver to "Keep [their] Station Tidy" could also be perceived as somewhat *ironic* because, in March 1974, ABBA released their debut single, *Waterloo*, which is also the name of a railway station in London. The irony of the text-producers' choice of actors creates a more memorable experience for the text-receiver that is stored as a mental model which they are reminded of whenever they are visiting their local railway station, because of the song.

In addition to the yellow t-shirt that Cassidy is wearing in Figure 5.5.2, the word "Cherish" is of significance, as this was the name of a single and album by David Cassidy, released in 1972 (David Cassidy Official Site, 2022). Once again, the juxtaposition between popular culture and keeping "Britain Tidy" is likely to resonate with the text-receiver because they can see that tackling litter pollution is something that everyone – regardless of their class, race gender or occupation – can and should get involved with because it is an important issue.

By contrast, the painting of a green pelican in Figure 5.5.3 signifies that litter pollution is an environmental issue and perpetuates environmentalist identities. However, the use of the colour green – which, as previously discussed, is a colour that typically has associations with nature, being outdoors and the environment – may interpellate environmental activists and campaigners who are more concerned about other environmental issues, such as global warming, and advises them to take this issue just as seriously; thus promoting the story that LITTER POLLUTION IS AN IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE THAT NEEDS ADDRESSING. In other words, the green pelican increases salience towards litter pollution by re-framing it as an important environmental issue, rather than a local neighbourhood issue or something that is mildly annoying and inconvenient, although similar to Figure 5.2.3 - a more contemporary

poster, published in 2019 - it could be claimed that the use of the colour green as opposed to the colours black and white frames the act of tackling litter pollution as fun and less arduous.
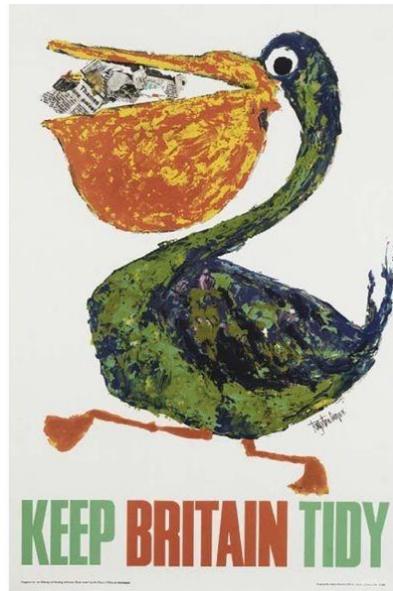
Figure 5.5.3 *Keep Britain Tidy* (Green pelican) poster by Keep Britain Tidy

Figure 5.5.4 *"Litter is offensive. First offence up to £100"* poster by Keep Britain Tidy

The image of Dixon, a fictional police constable from the television series, *Dixon from Dock Green*[6] (Figure 5.5.4) (see British Classic Comedy, 2019), is used to signify that LITTERING IS A LEGAL ISSUE AS WELL AS A SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE. This generates a negative social identity for those who drop litter by portraying them as criminals. Dixon also increases the modality of the poster since he is a police officer and police officers are powerful and authoritative figures. This informs the text-receiver that **all** forms of littering are not only socially-unacceptable and inconvenient, but also against the law, which urges the text-receiver to dispose of litter responsibly, not only in order to preserve the environment, but also to avoid landing a fine or criminal record *plus* a negative reputation.

Dixon gazes directly towards the camera, which signifies that the text-receiver is being watched by police officers, park wardens, refuse collectors, etc. whenever they are out in public to check that they are not littering. It is expected that the text-receiver will remember the gaze of Dixon (i.e. it will become stored as a mental model that is reactivated whenever they are faced with a similar situation) whenever they experience a situation where they need to hastily dispose of litter. In other words, the gaze stares the text-receiver in the eyes and scares them into assuming that they are under constant surveillance, coercing them to behave in an ecologically-responsible manner and put their litter in a bin or take it home with them, in the future.

In terms of colour and clothing, the poster is printed in black and white and Dixon is wearing traditional, 1970s police uniform. The police uniform tells a story about the identities of litterers and entails that such individuals are serious criminals that require formal, police intervention (i.e. a fine), not just a verbal or written warning. According to Stibbe (2020: 100), ecological identities serve to encourage text-receivers to either engage in particular behaviours and practices or resist them. Therefore, Dixon encourages the text-receiver to resist the social identity of a serious criminal (i.e. litterer) and instead join an in-group of individuals who are disposing of litter responsibly and taking positive steps to preserve the environment.

Additionally, the choice of colour and clothing tells the story that LITTERING IS A BLACK-AND-WHITE ISSUE. In other words, **any** item that has been dropped by an individual in a public space - however big or small it may be - classifies as a piece of litter. This challenges

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[6] Dixon from Dock Green was a police drama series, which aired between 1955 and 1976. Unlike other police officers at the time, Dixon (played by Jack Warner) was a friendlier and more sympathetic police officer (British Classic Comedy, 2019).

the assumption that some, compostable waste, such as apple cores, which easily and quickly biodegrade, is not litter and urges the text-receiver to be more vigilant when disposing of litter. The ideology that any dropped item is litter is reinforced by the high-modality sentences, "Litter **is** offensive" and "First offence **up to** £100", which activate the frame that LITTERING IS DEFINITELY A CRIMINAL OFFENCE, which, once again, coerces the text-receiver to take this issue more seriously or face the consequences.

Much like Figure 5.5.1 and 5.5.2, the depiction of Dixon – a celebrity actor - increases salience towards the campaign and tackling litter pollution more generally (Rootes, 2013), which enhances public engagement with this issue and encourages the text-receiver to act on this issue along with other celebrities. They will also be likely to engage with this issue because Dixon characterised a more sympathetic and understanding police officer, which was atypical of the time (British Classic Comedy, 2019). Therefore, it is as though the text-receiver is being given a second chance or final warning to act in an ecologically-responsible manner.
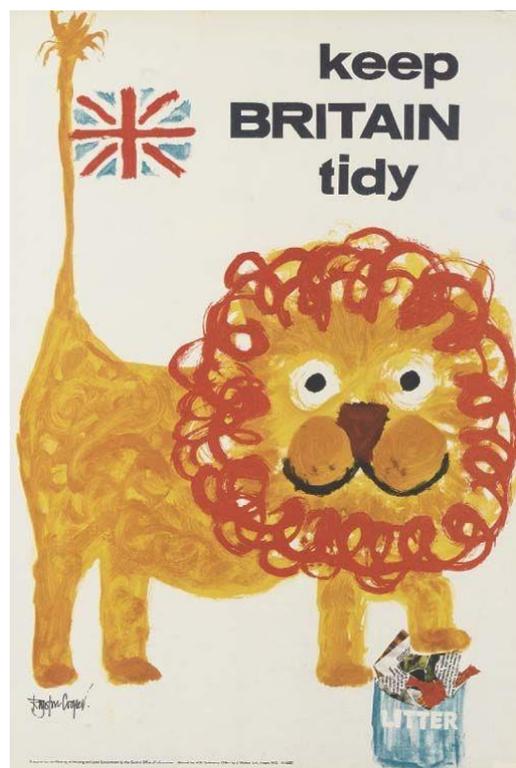
Figure 5.5.5 *Keep Britain Tidy* (Lion) poster by Keep Britain Tidy

In Figure 5.5.5, the artwork of a lion stamping its foot on a small pile of litter dominates the poster and tells the story that LITTERING IS BAD AND SOCIALLY-UNACCEPTABLE by representing the act of littering as something that is intolerable and a nuisance. Regarding the

theme of identity, this informs the text-receiver that those who drop litter are a nuisance and disliked by wider society. The artwork also acts as a visual metaphor because it tells the story that litter pollution must be stamped out just like, for instance, an ant's nest or a fire. The "stamp-out" metaphor emphasises that littering is socially-unacceptable and - like fire - is ecologically-destructive, thus warning the text-receiver that litterers are not accepted by wider society.

Furthermore, the depiction of a lion frames tackling litter pollution as a national responsibility because lions are a signifier of English national identity. Contextually, this poster was produced during the 1970s, which historically, is less than thirty years after the end of the Second World War and only a decade after England won the World Cup in 1966, meaning that there would have been a lot of national pride and patriotism still at this time. Ideologically, this sense of national pride encourages the text-receiver to tackle litter pollution, not only to preserve the environment, but also for the good of their country and to demonstrate that they are proud of their country.
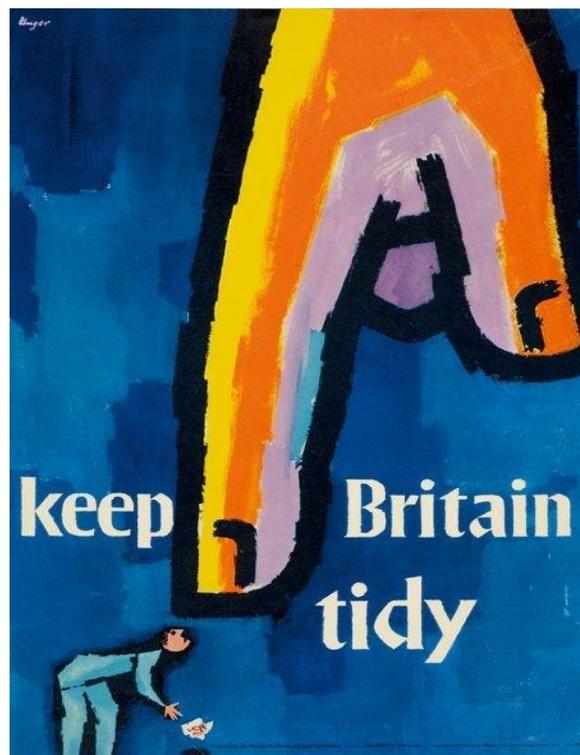
Figure 5.5.6 *Keep Britain Tidy* (Pointing finger) poster by Keep Britain Tidy

The pointing finger in Figure 5.5.6 is also a signifier of English national identity and is not dissimilar to the famous *Lord Kitchener wants you* poster that was designed by the British Army to recruit soldiers during the First World War.

The pointing finger interpellates the text-receiver as a subject of the discourse of national responsibility where everybody living in Great Britain comes together to tackle litter pollution in the same way that everybody came together to support Britain during WWI and WWII. In other words, it urges the text-receiver to "Keep Britain Tidy" in order to preserve the environment, but also for the good of their country. This likens tackling litter pollution to fighting an invasion at war which, once again, increases salience towards litter pollution as an important environmental issue because fighting against an invasion is essential to the survival of civilians. Moreover, both WWI and WWII were known for being times where people came together to support their country and celebrate being British. Therefore, the juxtaposition between litter pollution and war urges individuals to come together to tackle litter pollution with the same pride and community spirit that was exercised by society during WWI.

Figure 5.5.7 *Fly-tipping costs more than you think...* poster by Keep Britain Tidy

Figure 5.5.7 depicts a refuse collector wearing brown, personal protective equipment (PPE) and carrying black rubbish sacks that are presumably full of litter. The refuse collector

legitimises ecologically-responsible behaviours and practices, such as recycling and reducing single-use plastic consumption, which generates a positive social identity for individuals who engage in these behaviours and practices, but also increases salience towards "fly-tipping" as an important environmental issue that needs to be tackled. The honorific, "key workers", which is used to describe the refuse collector, portrays them as fundamental to the day-to-day running of the country, reminding the text-receiver that refuse collectors are important - but also busy – just like health and social care workers and supermarket staff, which have received lots of praise and attention from the media during the pandemic. This motivates the text-receiver to develop a new-founded respect for refuse collectors and do whatever they can (i.e. recycle, take their litter home with them and encourage other individuals not to litter) to reduce their workload during these unprecedented times. In turn, it could be argued that this creates new story-to-live-by where workers who may have traditionally been considered low or un-skilled workers are treated with more respect and viewed as an integral part of the country's workforce.

Despite the findings of Rootes (2013), the refuse collector – who is a local actor – appears to increase salience towards ecologically-responsible behaviours and practices, such as recycling and reducing single-use plastic consumption. However, this could be due to the fact that there had been lots of praise and support (i.e. Clap for Carers, meals for NHS workers) from the public towards the country's "key workers" who have risked theirs and their families' lives throughout the Coronavirus pandemic.

Alternatively, the anonymity of the refuse collector could signify how the public have neglected its "key workers" who have continued with regular waste collection services during the pandemic, whilst many workers in other industries have been on furlough or working from home. In other words, at a time when refuse collectors are "stretched like never before", the public are continuing to drop litter; thus treating these "key workers" as though they are invisible or are machines that can work tirelessly without a break or day-off. The PPE that the refuse collector is wearing erases virtually every aspect of their personal identity (i.e. we cannot see their face, hair, etc.) which tells a story about how refuse collectors are being treated by wider society as though they are invisible and unimportant - despite their fundamental role in the workforce. The PPE also demonstrates just how dangerous being a refuse collector during the pandemic is that they need extra protection – not just a simple face covering or visa - in order to stay safe. This is designed to make the text-receiver feel guilty, but also urge them to take more personal responsibility for their actions in order to reduce the

workload of "key workers" during these difficult times. The refuse collector walks away from the camera shot which could signify how the country's' "key workers" (specifically refuse collectors) are at breaking point and are desperately trying to escape this dangerously overwhelming situation because they are both exhausted and frightened of contracting Covid-19 and transmitting it to members of their household. However, they are, unfortunately, unable to escape their workload and stay at home - like the rest of the country - because individuals continue to drop litter when they are out shopping for essential items or exercising.

With regard to *gaze*, the refuse collector gazes downwards, rather than directly at the camera. The direction in which an actor gazes serves as an *image act* (Machin & Mayr, 2012: 70) which signifies how the text-receiver should perceive an actor and/ or respond to the situation. In other words, the refuse collector may be walking away from the shot to signify that they have done everything that they can (i.e. they have cleared up after everybody and they have instructed the text-receiver on what to do next). However, this responsbility has now been reassigned to the text-receiver, meaning that it is up to them to take control of the situation.

The sense of urgency in the poster contrasts the likes of Figure 5.2.1 ("Litter isn't much fun when you're only 5ft. 1") and Figure 5.3.2 ("The pollution problem is in our hands") where litter pollution is represented as annoying and a minor inconvenience in a rather light-hearted and jovial manner. The ellipsis at the end of the sentence, "Fly tipping costs more than you think…" creates suspense and encourages the text-receiver to think about their actions and what they can do to tackle this issue. In other words, litter pollution is represented as a far more serious issue in this poster than it is in some of the posters in Data Set A.

Figure 5.5.8 *Thoughtless dog owners we're watching you!* Posters by Keep Britain Tidy

In Figure 5.5.8 - which comprises four A3 posters that were launched by KBT in order to investigate to effectiveness of "watching eyes" as a means of combating the problem of dog fouling (Keep Britain Tidy, 2014) - the social actor is also anonymous, since only their eyes and nose are visible to the text-receiver. On the one hand, the anonymity of the actor, once again, erases almost every aspect of their personal identity, which could signify that the public are treating refuse collectors and park wardens as though they are invisible and are continuing to increase their workload by not clearing up after their dog. However, on the other hand, much like in Figure 5.5.4 (Dixon from Dock Green), concentrating on the eyes of the actor serves as a visual warning for the text-receiver that they are being watched by police

officers, park wardens, etc. whilst they are walking their dog, so must therefore ensure that they clear-up after their dog. What makes these posters unique in comparison to other posters is that they are fluorescent (Keep Britain, 2014). Consequently, these glow-in-the-dark images may surprise the text-receiver, meaning that the image of watching eyes gets stored as a mental model that is reactivated whenever they are walking their dog in future.

The social actor has blue eyes that stand-out from the rest of the poster, which is printed in black, grey and white. The colour blue has associations with the cold and uncaring, which signifies that individuals who do not clear up after their dog are selfish and careless individuals, which, once again, generates a negative social identity for individuals who behave in such a manner. By contrast, the background colours (black, grey and white) once again promotes the story that LITTERING (including dog fouling) IS A BLACK-AND-WHITE ISSUE, meaning that dog fouling is always problematic, regardless of how big or small the dog or dog foul is and must be stopped. Similar to Figure 5.5.4, this increases the modality of the poster by informing the text-receiver that dog fouling is *always* a serious issue.

The social actor gazes directly towards the camera which, once again, interpellates the text-receiver as a subject of the discourse of individual responsibility, but also promotes the story that dog fouling is BAD AND SOCIALLY-UNACCEPTABLE because the actor is frowning at the text-receiver. This suggests that the actor is horrified and disgusted by the behaviour of dog owners that do not clear up after themselves. It could also be argued that this close-up camera shot functions as a visual metaphor that essentially urges the text-receiver to "take a closer look" at the issue of dog fouling and consider the full consequences of their actions (Hansen & Machin, 2016: 9). Subsequently, if the text-receiver takes "a closer look" at this issue and educates themselves about the environmental impact of dog fouling, then it is hoped that they will share this information with other individuals and that eventually dog fouling will become less of an issue. The use of frowning differs from the facial expressions of the actors in Figures 5.5.1 (ABBA) and 5.5.2 (David Cassidy) where they are smiling. Once again, this increases the severity of litter pollution as a highly-important environmental issue and demonstrates that this issue is becoming more urgent by the year.

As previously mentioned in Chapter 3 of this thesis, Van Dijk's approach considers how text-producers use and abuse the fact that they have access to a wide range of information, research and discourses that the public may not have access to in order to influence how text-receivers' think and behave (Van Dijk, 2015). For instance, journalists have access to press

conferences and scientists have unrestricted access to peer-reviewed research journals. With regard to Figure 5.5.8, it could be argued that the text-producer (i.e. KBT) uses the evidence from this experiment, that the public are unlikely to read, to educate the text-receiver and make them aware that dog fouling is socially-unacceptable and will not been tolerated.

Figure 5.5.9 *Spread love not bugs, don't litter masks and gloves* poster by Keep Britain Tidy

In Data Set B, *word-play* is used to reveal stories about the social identities of individuals that engage / do not engage in environmental behaviours and practices. For instance, in Figure 5.5.9, the written request, "Spread love not bugs", tells the story that LITTER AND PLASTIC POLLUTION ARE DESTROYING HUMAN HEALTH AS WELL AS THE ENVIRONMENT because Covid-19 can be transmitted via PPE. Since this poster was released, there have been peer-reviewed studies which explain that Covid-19 is not actually transmitted by touch or surfaces, as scientists had initially believed (see Goldman, 2020 for instance), which means that a more contemporary audience would perhaps view this poster and not be so concerned by the likelihood of PPE spreading Covid-19 to others. However, it highlights the reality that litter

and plastic pollution are becoming worse as a result of the pandemic. Therefore, the word-play tells the story that it is imperative to dispose of used face masks and gloves, not only to preserve the environment, but also to prevent litter and plastic pollution from becoming a pandemic of its own.

At the time of publication, Figure 5.5.9 would have told the story that LITTERING IN THE COVID-19 ERA IS HAZARDOUS AND COULD POTENTIALLY INCREASE THE NUMBER OF INFECTIONS; potentially leading to an even-longer lockdown (that the text-receiver would be keen to avoid). This encourages the text-receiver to dispose of any used PPE responsibly in order to preserve the environment and avoid a spike in Covid-19 infections. It also tells a story about the social identities of individuals that drop litter during the Covid-19 pandemic and implies that they may be somewhat responsible for rising infection, hospitalisation and death rates – even if they are following all other Covid-19 guidelines – and are therefore not only destroying the environment, but also human health and wellbeing.

Once again, Van Dijk (2015) would argue that KBT have greater access and understanding of scientific research about the effects of litter and plastic pollution on Covid-19, which the text-receiver trusts as a reliable source, making them more likely to follow the advice and behave in an ecologically-responsible manner in future.

Figure 5.5.10 *Don't be a tosser poster* by Keep Britain Tidy

In Figure 5.5.10, "Don't be a tosser", activates the frame that littering from a vehicle is a CARELESS AND SELFISH ACT because the word, "tosser", has derogatory connotations and entails that motorists and passengers that drop litter from their vehicles are idiotic, stupid and

unlikable. In turn, this generates a negative social identity for such individuals that the text-receiver will want to resist in order to be viewed as a moral and responsible individual by wider society. Therefore, the discursive construction of a negative social identity for this group of individuals is designed with the hope that this will educate them to respect the environment in future. The text-receiver would more than likely find this poster when parked in a layby or in the car park of a service area, where there are normally plenty of bins nearby, meaning that there is no excuse to not dispose of litter responsibly. Consequently, this tells the story that individuals who drop litter/ fly-tip are also lazy and careless.

Unsurprisingly, the fine that is issued to individuals who are caught littering has increased by more than £50 from the "Up to £100" fine that is advertised in Figure 5.5.4. This shows how littering is now seen as a more serious crime than it was during the 1970s. There is also, however, a big difference between the stern gaze that Dixon from Dock Green gives to the text-receiver in Figure 5.5.4 as a warning to those who litter and calling those who litter a "tosser" in Figure 5.5.10. In other words, littering is not only now seen as a more serious crime, but it is also viewed as more socially-unacceptable than it was during the 1970s.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

6.1 The Findings of this Research

The aim of this research was to explore how discourses of responsibility (individual, collective and corporate) are socially-constructed in environmental campaign posters concerning litter and plastic pollution. Using Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Approach to CDA and Stibbe's the stories-we-live-by framework for ecolinguistics, this research has successfully highlighted that discourses of individual and collective responsibility are more commonplace in environmental campaign posters concerning litter and plastic pollution than discourses of corporate responsibility. This reflects the findings of the existing literature (see Khan, 1992; Alexander, 2013; Gammelgaard *et al*., 2021), which found that corporations have the tendency to erase or cover-up the environmental damage that their products and/ or services produce and try to blame this on individuals. Nonetheless, the absence of corporate responsibility is highly-concerning because businesses, politicians and journalists have the power, money and specialist knowledge that is required to tackle this important environmental issue. .

With regard to R.Q. 1, this research has highlighted that discourses of responsibility surrounding litter and plastic pollution are socially-constructed by frames, framings and erasure. For instance, personal pronouns were used to erase corporate responsibility and re-frame litter and plastic pollution as an individual or collective responsibility, whilst present-tense verbs told the story that LITTER AND PLASTIC POLLUTION IS AN IMPORTANT ISSUE WHICH NEEDS TACKLING IMMEDIATELY by individuals or a particular group in society (i.e. those living in Great Britain). Elsewhere, the frame that LITTER AND PLASTIC POLLUTION IS AN IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES WHICH NEEDS TACKLING IMMEDIATELY was somewhat restricted by vague and ambiguous statements, which erased discourses of responsibility surrounding litter and plastic pollution (i.e. who is responsible for litter and plastic pollution) and the text-receiver's role in tackling this issue. The use of temporal references, such as times and dates, activated the frame that TACKLING LITTER AND PLASTIC POLLUTION IS ONLY NECCESARY AT CERTAIN TIMES OF THE YEAR; thus erasing the fact that this is *always* an important issue and placing it into a void where it is only important between "22nd March and 23rd April".

In the past, the linguistic analysis of frames, framing and erasure has been attributed to Stibbe's framework, whereas users of CDA have not explored these features in great depth. With regard to R.Q. 4, this demonstrates that CDA is pluralistic and can be combined with other analytical and theoretical frameworks – like Stibbe's framework - to examine a broader variety of discourse structures, beyond those suggested by Van Dijk.

Discourses of responsibility were also socially-constructed by metaphors which served to challenge the text-receiver's assumption of litter and single-use plastic (i.e. that it is an unmanagable task or that littering simply consists of discarding small items, such as crisp packets and plastic drink's bottles) and invited individuals to reconsider the environmental impact of litter and plastic pollution.

A clear difference between Data Set A and B was that in Data Set A the negative appraisal pattern was used to represent litter pollution as unnecessary and mildly inconvenient at worst, whilst in Data Set B, litter and plastic pollution was represented as an international crisis and likened to Covid-19. With regard to R.Q. 3, which considered whether discourses of responsibility surrounding litter and plastic pollution have evolved over time this suggests that litter and plastic pollution has become a more salient issue within the public discourse over the past decade. In other words, it is considered to be more important now than ever before to fulfil this responsibility. As previously discussed (see page 48), the benefits of analysing linguistic evaluations and appraisal patterns in CDA is that it enables analysts to establish a much-needed (Van Dijk, 1993) ideological stance for the analysis (i.e. it enables them to make clear their own, personal viewpoint that guides the analysis) (Stibbe, 2020), but this is considered to be difficult to achieve when using CDA alone (Perrins, 2019: 21-22). Therefore, combining these two frameworks, in the context of studying evaluations and appraisal patterns in particular, worked exceptionally well.

Discourses of responsibility surrounding litter and plastic pollution were also socially-constructed by ecological identities, which framed the act of tackling litter and plastic pollution (and environmental issues more generally) as a less-demanding and time-consuming exercise. In other words, in circumstances where individual and collective actions, such as recycling and litter-picking, were emphasised, the use of non-ecological colours, including yellow, allowed text-receivers to realise that whilst they were duty-bound to tackle this issue, they did not necessarily have to conform to stereotypical, environmentalists identities, if they did not wish to. Discursively, this is an act of *resistance* towards

hegemonic, environmentalist identities, which enabled the text-producer to interpellate a wider audience, including individuals who perhaps did not care about or were less concerned by environmental issues. The use of non-environmentalist colours is highly-effective and should be praised according to the ecosophy because it promotes a beneficial story (i.e. that it is important to litter-pick and recycle), albeit in an unconventional manner. Moreover, as previously mentioned (see page 54), during the 1960s and 70s, society were less concerned by environmental issues because these were commonly framed by scientists and journalists as distant problems that the current generation did not need to worry about (Ehrlich, 1969). The use of non-ecological colours also proves that stories can be revealed by photographs, drawings and even singing as well as written and spoken language (Stibbe, 2020: 11). With regard to RQ. 4, this demonstrates that the design of this research project (i.e. combining the two frameworks) also worked well when analysing semiotic modes of communication because users of Van Dijk's approach have not traditionally focused on visual or multimodal aspects of texts in great depth. Another difference between the two data sets was that in Data Set A, the discursive construction of national identities was prevalent and generated a positive social identity for those that engaged in ecologically-responsible behaviours and practices, such as recycling and litter-picking, simultaneously encouraging the text-receiver to tackle litter and plastic pollution in order to preserve the environment, but also to show that they are proud of their country. Another fundamental different between Data Sets A and B was the employment of celebrity and non-celebrity actors, although the effectiveness of such actors was somewhat inconclusive. On the one hand, celebrity actors, which featured more in Data Set A than Data Set B, socially-constructed ecologically-responsible behaviours and practices, such as litter-picking, recycling, reducing single-use plastic consumption, in an entertaining and accessible manner, whilst simultaneously challenging the assumption that in order to address environmental issues, individuals require scientific or environmental knowledge (Moser & Dilling, 2011: 164). They also increased salience towards the campaign because, through reinforcement, the text-receiver started to associate certain celebrities, such as Ronnie Corbett, ABBA and David Cassidy, with the KBT campaign; thus increasing public engagement with this issue. On the other hand, non-celebrity actors, such as the refuse collector in Figure 5.5.1, which featured more in Data Set B than in Data Set A, also socially-constructed ecologically-responsible behaviours and practices, although this may have been because these actors were introduced using honorifics (i.e. "Key workers") which encouraged the text-receiver to look up to them and follow their advice in the same way that they would have a celebrity actor, such as Ronnie Corbett or The Wombles. However, it is worth noting

that some of the posters in Data Set B were created during the Covid-19 pandemic when the public started to gain more respect and gratitude for the country's key workers, such as doctors, nurses, teachers and supermarket workers, which could explain why non-celebrity actors also increased salience towards the campaign. Overall, this suggests that the findings of Rootes (2013) (i.e. that celebrity actors increase salience towards environmental campaigns) are true, but only in certain circumstances. For instance, in circumstances where a non-celebrity actor is depicted, but portrayed as an important role model, such as a "key worker", this increases salience towards a campaign in the same way that celebrity actors does. With regard to RQ. 1, it could be argued that the use of celebrity and non-celebrity actors creates the impression that tackling litter and plastic pollution is a collective responsibility, which demonstrates that discourses of responsibility can also be socially-constructed by social actors.

Undoubtedly, the main difference between Data Sets A and B was that plastic pollution was represented as a salient issue in Data Set B, whilst in Data Set A, there is no mention of single-use plastic or plastic pollution whatsoever. Once again, this is unsurprising given that the mass production of plastic was a relatively new concept during the 1970s and it was only during the 1960s that scientists began to realise that plastic was problematic (Schlanger, 2019), whilst in recent years there has been far more emphasis on tackling plastic pollution (see Hunt, 2017; Chillcott, 2020 for instance) and a greater, public awareness of the dangers of plastic. Answering R.Q.3, this shows that discourses of responsibility have evolved since the 1970s to now include tackling plastic pollution in addition to litter pollution, as part of fulfilling this responsibility.

In a preface to the second edition of *Ecolinguistics: Language, Ecology and The Stories We Live By*, Stibbe (2020: vii) described the Covid-19 pandemic as an opportunity for humans to reflect on and re-assess their everyday lives in order to learn from past mistakes. Whilst everyday life has undoubtedly changed over the two years (i.e. more people are working from home than ever before; meaning that there is slightly less traffic on the roads now than there was prior to March 2020) and these changes are likely to benefit the environment in the medium and long-term, the situation regarding litter and plastic pollution continues to escalate. Therefore, the increased salience towards plastic pollution in Data Set B is testimony that these claims are not representative of *all* environmental issues and that society still has a long way to go in the fight against litter and plastic pollution.

6.2 The Limitations of this Research

Research in Chapter 2 of the thesis (see page 16) revealed that OCCs effectively encourage individuals to engage with environmental activism (Katz-Kimchi & Manosevitch, 2015). This suggests that, over the past decade, online campaigning has grown in popularity. Therefore, a limitation of this research is that it *only* analyses campaign posters, which are becoming less popular, due to the prevalence of other, more contemporary forms of campaigning, such as campaigning via social media. Philo (2007 c.f. Hansen & Machin, 2013) argues that discourse analysts often study texts that the public no longer engage with. For instance, they state that researchers still often analyse newspaper articles, even though there has been a reduction in newspaper sales, due to a lack of trust towards journalists. It could be argued that analysing posters that have been published in the past decade is somewhat pointless when other forms of campaigning are becoming more favourable and so a future research project may wish to compare posters from the 1970s - when campaign posters were incredibly popular - with a more contemporary genre of campaigning, such as social media campaigning.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Research

If this particular research project were to be revisited in the future, the researcher may wish to combine qualitative *and* quantitative methods. For instance, corpus linguistic software, such as AntConc, BNC, BYC, LancsBox, could be utilised to examine the frequency of specific lexical collocations relating to the responsibility of litter and plastic pollution and identify any keywords, phrases and synonyms that may be associated with / used to socially-construct discourses of responsibility surrounding litter and plastic pollution. Alexander and Stibbe (2014) are in favour of this approach and believe that a corpus-assisted approaches to CDA can be used to enhance our understanding of how the stories-we-live-by are revealed by evaluations, nominalisations, distancing techniques, euphemisms, argumentative strategies, antonyms and ideologies. One of the benefits of using corpus-assisted approaches is that it enables discourse analysts to critique larger samples of data (Baker, 2006a).

Alternatively, the researcher may wish to conduct a short, online survey or questionnaire to complement the findings of the textual analysis, where respondents are asked to state whether they think that individuals or a particular group are being held responsible and to blame for litter and plastic pollution in each of the posters. Whilst surveys have been criticised in the past for only providing a "snapshot" of respondents' thoughts, feelings and opinions (Hansen

& Machin, 2013: 208), this could be highly-beneficial for the identification of discourses of responsibility. Furthermore, surveys are cost-effective, less time-consuming than interviews and focus groups and can be completed remotely, provided that respondents have access to the internet (Walliman, 2018: 110).

Political Economic Analysis (PEA) could be used in addition to the analytical frameworks to evaluate the production factors that may have influenced the posters. PEA is centred around the idea that the economic activity and practices influence society's social structure and that corporations have control over the types of discourse that are produced (Lynch *et al.*, 2017: 15) and examines how such texts are financed, who owns these texts and their influence on the way that people think and behave in relation to environmental issues (Hansen & Machin, 2013). In other words, a PEA of ECDs could explore the relevance of the KBT campaign and who is interested in it. It could also consider *why* KBT invest a lot of money into producing campaigns when they could use this money to research popular channels for campaigning or to buy more litter bins, start-up new recycling initiatives or help those overseas who are adversely affected by this issue. Future research could apply the analytical/ theoretical frameworks that have been used to examine discourses of responsibility in this particular research project to address another social issue. For instance, they could be used to explore how discourses of responsibility surrounding healthy eating are socially-constructed in health and nutrition campaigns. Such a project could examine whether individuals or corporations, such as fast-food takeaway outlets, politicians and food producers, are held responsible and to blame for an increase in human health problems, such as heart disease, even though the price of a takeaway burger, for instance, is often cheaper than the price of a bag of fruit. This would allow the researcher to fully establish whether this framework for examining discourses of responsibility (comprising the SCA and Stibbe's framework) is flexible enough to explore other social issues.

APPENDICES

Sources of Data

Figure 5.2.1 Keep Britain Tidy (1973)*'Litter isn't much fun when you're only 5ft 1'* [Internet]. Available from https://twitter.com/phelpsiesarah/status/1277309703970852864 [Photograph courtesy of Phelps, S. (2020)] [Accessed 29th September 2020].

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Figure 5.3.2 Keep Britain Tidy (1973) *"The pollution problem is in our hands. Keep Britain Tidy."* [Internet]. Available from http://www.voicesofeastanglia.com/2017/01/keep-britain-tidy.html [Accessed 23rd September 2021].

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Figure 5.5.6 Keep Britain Tidy (1973) *Keep Britain Tidy* (pointing finger) [Internet]. Available from http://www.voicesofeastanglia.com/2017/01/keep-britain-tidy.html [Accessed 15th April 2021].

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Figure 5.5.8 Keep Britain Tidy (2013) *Thoughtless dog owners we're watching you!* [Internet]. Available from https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/local-authorities/reduce-litter/dog-fouling/solutions/were-watching-you [Accessed 17th February 2021].

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Tables and Diagrams

Figure 3.1.1 – Fairclough's framework for Critical Discourse Analysis. Adapted from: Fig. 2.1 Discourse as text, interaction and context. In: Fairclough, N. (2015) *Language and power*. 3rd ed. London, Routledge, pp. 58-59.

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Table 3.5.1 – Types of story and how they are revealed by discourse. Adapted from: Stibbe, A. (2020) Table 1.1 Nine forms that stories take and their linguistic manifestations. In: *Ecolinguistics: language, ecology and the stories we live by*. 2nd ed. Oxford, Routledge.

Table 3.6.1 – The three main spectrums that all ecosophies fall within. Based on: Stibbe, A. (2020) Ecosophy. In: *Ecolinguistics: language, ecology and the stories we live by*. 2nd ed. Oxford, Routledge, pp. 13.

Table 5.3.1 – Negative appraisal pattern, Data Set A

Table 5.3.2 – Negative appraising pattern, Data Set B

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