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THE BIOPHILIC AND BIOCENTRIC DISCOURSE IN EDWARD ABBEY'S THE MONKEY WRENCH GANG

Abstract

This research aims to analyze ecologism discourse in Edward Abbey's novel through James Paul Gee's discourse analysis and Julia Kristeva's suprasegmental and intertextual approaches. The suprasegmental uses the psycholinguistic approach of Jan Renkema and Kristeva's intertextuality, provided by Gee's methodological tools. These approaches are used to know the novel's theme by Edward Abbey and to analyze how four characters from diverse backgrounds converge into their environmental commitments. Findings reveal that the theme was found to be a struggle to conserve the environment threatened by the dam's construction. Despite their different backgrounds, the four main characters share fundamental biophilic and biocentric traits that shape their ecological activism. Biophilic characteristics include protective love and territorial attachment, empathy toward nature and awe for natural wonders. In addition, their biocentric qualities manifest through voluntary simplicity, advocacy for nature's rights, and appreciation of natural aesthetics. Abbey's strategic narrative construction effectively communicates these ecological philosophies, ultimately influencing real-world environmental activism beyond the novel.

Keywords: Biophilia, Biocentrism, Discourse Analysis, Ecologism, and Novel.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis wacana ekologisme dalam novel karya Edward Abbey melalui analisis wacana James Paul Gee dan pendekatan suprasegmental dan intertekstual Julia Kristeva. Suprasegmental menggunakan pendekatan psikolinguistik Jan Renkema dan intertekstualitas Kristeva, yang disediakan oleh perangkat metodologis Gee. Pendekatan ini digunakan untuk mengetahui tema novel karya Edward Abbey dan menganalisis bagaimana empat karakter dari latar belakang yang beragam bertemu dalam komitmen lingkungan mereka. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa tema yang ditemukan adalah perjuangan untuk melestarikan lingkungan yang terancam oleh pembangunan bendungan. Meskipun latar belakang mereka berbeda, keempat karakter utama memiliki sifat biofilik dan biosentris mendasar yang membentuk aktivisme ekologis mereka. Karakteristik biofilik meliputi cinta protektif dan keterikatan teritorial, empati terhadap alam dan kekaguman terhadap keajaiban alam. Selain itu, kualitas biosentris mereka terwujud melalui kesederhanaan sukarela, advokasi untuk hak-hak alam, dan apresiasi estetika alam. Konstruksi naratif strategis Abbey secara efektif mengomunikasikan filosofi ekologi ini, yang pada akhirnya memengaruhi aktivisme lingkungan dunia nyata di luar novel.

Kata Kunci: Biophilia, Biosentrisme, Analisis Wacana, Ekoligisme dan Novel.

BACKGROUND

Nowadays, Literary learning has become crucial in second language education. According to Krasniqi and Hykolli (2021), the study of literature extends beyond the understanding of literal texts to developing interpretive skills for deeper contextual meaning. This process increases students' linguistic awareness, helps them understand the nuances of language, and teaches them how context affects meaning. This view is supported by the argument that novels, in particular, provide a strong foundation for second language learning due to their preference

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among educators and learners. The main benefit of using novels in literature-based language learning is the increased intercultural awareness of students (Mitsigkas, 2020).

The effectiveness of literary learning, particularly through novels, is further enhanced when educators recognize and accommodate individual learning differences among students. As noted by Zagoto and Yarni (2019), every human being is created with unique characteristics and individual differences, including variations in learning styles such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic approaches. Understanding these individual differences in learning styles is crucial for teachers to vary their teaching methods and select appropriate learning techniques to optimize each student's learning process. This pedagogical consideration becomes even more significant when examining the linguistic aspects of literary works. As highlighted by Hapsari (2022), literary works serve not only as entertainment but also as valuable sources for enriching readers' inner experiences, while functioning as complete and comprehensive language constructs that create fictional worlds, refer to real-world realities, and can be understood through codes and norms embedded in specific literary, linguistic, and socio-cultural systems. This multifaceted nature of literature makes it an ideal medium for developing both linguistic competence and cultural understanding in language learning contexts.

As conveyed by Neophytos Mitsigkas (2015), using novels can also increase students' interest and involvement in language learning because it can provide a more engaging learning experience than ordinary textbooks, where the stories and characters in novels can often inspire students to discuss and actively participate in the language learning process. The statements of Malawat, Akhiruddin, and Nursalam (2023) Reinforce this view. Who adds that novels serve as a comprehensive source of language input and provide an immersive learning experience through the reader's emotional interaction with some characters' narrative in a novel. Furthermore, els possess unique advantages over other literary genres. They stem from the author's imagination Nurachmana and Purwaka (2020) Assert that novel creativity offers captivating narratives and insights into various life experiences. This richness aids students in achieving deeper reading comprehension when studying literature.

However, many readers struggle to grasp the author's intended message in novels. A discourse analysis approach effectively decodes the content and meaning of fictional realities. This aligns with the views of Hutajulu and Pardomuan (2023), who state that discourse analysis examines how texts relate to situational and cultural contexts, revealing insights about events, opinions, and beliefs. Students can better understand the author's message within its social and historical context by employing discourse analysis.

To understand more about discourse analysis, James Paul Gee (2005) explains that discourse analysis in the context of novels emphasizes that literary works are social practices that reflect people's activities, identities, and mindsets. Moreover, James Paul Gee (2018) also argues that every element in the novel, from the dialogue between the characters to the narrative, contains a more profound social and cultural meaning. To easily understand the deeper social meaning of a story in a novel, Renkema fixes that view with a psycholinguistic approach, which analyzes story structure through story grammar, comprising key elements, namely setting and episode components. The episode can be divided into beginning, development, and ending sections, with the ending highlighting complex reactions and the narrative's goal path.

According to Mandler and Johnson in Renkema (2004), the psycholinguistic approach views story grammar as a cognitive activity, exploring how readers understand and remember narratives. Thus, this approach is crucial for comprehending how characters in the novel communicate and express their perspectives. Edward Abbey's novel The Monkey Wrench Gang (1975) was chosen because it is particularly relevant to this research. The story has successfully inspired and provided new insights for environmental activists.

This study aims to analyze the four main characters in the novel from an ecological perspective, focusing on their shared commitment to nature conservation. It also explores how linguistic and psycholinguistic approaches reveal social-psychological dynamics related to ecology that prioritize environmental protection. The novel reinforces this movement by depicting characters who oppose industrialization and capitalism, which destroys the environment. The conservation commitment of the characters is shaped by social interaction and individual experiences based on two concepts:

The first is biophilia; Biophilia is a concept that shows the natural human tendency to love and connect with nature and living things, the pressure of the essential relationship between humans and the natural world for well-being and happiness. This concept underscores the importance of preserving biodiversity and the environment to balance ecosystems and human life. First put forward by a biologist. Eric From (1964) and further developed by Edward O. Wilson (1984) In "Biophilia," this concept states that ecological consciousness is an integral part of the human mental structure. Biophilic individuals exhibit characteristics such as protective love, territoriality, empathy, and admiration for the wonders of nature. These characteristics reflect the deep connection between humans and nature and reinforce the role of biophilia in supporting mental health and ecological awareness.

The second concept is the biocentrism concept. Biocentrism is an environmental ethics perspective that places all forms of life at the center of moral consideration. In his work, Paul W. Taylor (1986) argues that every living organism possesses inherent value and deserves respect, regardless of its utility to humans. He emphasizes that humans are not superior but integral members of Earth's life community, with a moral obligation to protect all life forms. Biocentrism advocates for a fundamental shift in how humans perceive and interact with nature, promoting deep respect for all living organisms as the foundation of environmental ethics. According to Igben and Ogan (2023). Biocentrism underscores the importance of ecosystem stability and health for the survival of all life forms. It extends justice to all entities within ecosystems. Biocentric people practice voluntary moderation, advocate for nature's rights, and appreciate natural aesthetics.

Moreover, Candiotto L. (2022) "Loving the Earth by Loving a Place: A Situated Approach to the Love of Nature" argues that the universal concept of love for nature overlooks inherent differences. He proposes that love for a place involves participatory common-sense making. Another study by Tampubolon & Purba (2022), published in the journal Society as Dei, Journal of Religion and Society in 2022, assesses the impact of environmental ethics on environmental damage amid the current crisis. The last research was written by Singh Digvinjay (2024), explores the development of environmentalism in contemporary literature, focusing on how modern works address ecology, climate change, biodiversity loss, and the human-nature relationship.

Although some of the environmental themes in this novel have been discussed in previous research, no research has examined why the characters with different backgrounds and statuses in the novel can have the same commitment and goal to save and protect nature. To navigate these complexities, this research is guided by two research questions, namely a question about the theme in Edward Abbey's novel The Monkey Wrench Gang and explaining the fundamental reasons four characters come to the same commitment to preserve nature from an ecologism perspective

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with discourse analysis based on the theory of James Paul Gee (2014) to explore the analysis of ecological discourse in The Monkey Wrench Gang by Edward Abbey. The novel was chosen because it represents the struggle against environmental degradation and its significant influence on the ecological movement in the United States. In addition, the book is also relevant to the English Language Education program because it helps deepen understanding of how language is used in real social and cultural contexts. Therefore, this study uses Gee's (2014) basic discourse analysis framework, especially its emphasis on meaning in social contexts and cultural models.

This research also adopts Julia Kristeva's (1982) conceptual framework as the primary theoretical basis, which divides analytical approaches into suprasegmental and intertextual. In other words, for the operationalization of suprasegmental analysis, the study used the story grammar approach from Mandler and Johnson (1977), within the psycholinguistic framework of (Renkema, 2004). This approach examines linguistic patterns, narrative structures, and discourse features within the novel, facilitating understanding of how meaning is constructed through literary devices while accounting for the complex interplay between language, society, and cultural significance. In the intertextual analysis, the researchers use the theoretical framework by James Paul Gee (2011). Gee's approach is suitable for revealing how literary elements combine to create meaning and how narrative patterns influence reader interpretation.

The data is collected through in-depth close reading to understand the author's content and message, resulting in a synopsis that facilitates the research process. Specific parts of the story are then encoded and summarized into a simple story, with the codes used to create diagrams based on the psycholinguistic approach by Renkema (2014) and the intertextual approach by (Kristeva, 1980). The data analysis uses the discourse analysis framework by James Paul Gee (2014), to explore the construction of meaning in literary works, as well as Julia Kristeva's theoretical framework as the leading theory through two approaches: suprasegmental which examines linguistic units from lexical to discourse to prove clear textual boundaries, and intertextuality which explores the dialogue between novel narratives and external textual references, including correspondence across literary works and traces of contextuality sociocultural as well as temporal in the narrative structure.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

As mentioned above, this research is aimed at answering two research problems. To answer the first question of this research, the researchers strive to conduct a systematic, gradual analysis. Firstly, the researchers do a close reading of the novel. The result of this step is a synopsis that is later used to facilitate the research process. The next step is constructing a simple story. These codes are used to create a diagram based on Renkema's (2014) psycholinguistic approaches, followed by making the story grammar model developed by (Jean Mandler, 1977). Below is the result of the story grammar that the researchers have made up:

Edward Abbey's novel The Monkey Wrench Gang is set against the backdrop of majestic canyon landscapes, the stunning Colorado River, and vast deserts threatened by large-scale development projects, with the Glen Canyon Dam as a massive structure that symbolizes ecological destruction and sparks the ire of environmental activists. The story centers on four unexpected allies: George W. Hayduke (a Vietnam War veteran), Dr. A.K. Sarvis (an established doctor), Seldom Seen Smith (a river guide), and Bonnie Abbzug (a brilliant young woman), who unite out of deep frustration over environmental degradation.

Initially, the group tried conventional environmental protection methods through campaigns and petitions to challenge destructive development projects. Still, they soon realized that government agencies and corporations remained indifferent to peaceful protests, forcing them to step up their tactics. Their resistance began with small acts of defiance, such as burning billboard ads that destroyed the natural landscape. Then, they evolved into a more aggressive form of environmental activism with Hayduke as a tactical mentor who taught guerrilla techniques to make their sabotage even more sophisticated and effective. The group systematically targets infrastructure that supports destructive development, including mining, railroads, and construction equipment, with the most ambitious goal of destroying the Glen Canyon Dam as a symbol of industrial domination over nature.

The story ends with the dramatic dissolution of the group as each member chooses a different path. Doc Sarvis and Bonnie retreat to conventional life, while Seldom Seen Smith returns to the profession of river guide. Hayduke continues his radical struggle, symbolizing the unbreakable will of an environmentalist who is always ready to continue the fight against ecological destruction.

As seen above, this novel is relevant to be analyzed in an ecological context because it presents four characters who unite to fight environmental exploitation. It shows how each character, despite having different backgrounds, contributes to an environmental movement. It represents a social struggle that ultimately has come into a commitment and goal to create a group of environmental activists who care about and protect nature from human exploitation that destroys nature by committing sabotage as a form of community protest.

After knowing the novel's theme, the researchers focus on how the four characters come to the same commitment to preserve nature, which is the second research question. To answer this question, the researchers need to analyze the four characters by employing Julia Kristeva's intertextuality framework in conjunction with Gee's (2005) operational analysis method.

Finally, after investigating and analyzing the dialog actors in the novel with broader environmental discourse through the methodological tools provided by Gee's (2005), the

researchers find that the concepts of Biophilia and Biocentrism are the answers. Eric Fromm first introduced the idea of Biophilia (2010) and developed by Edward O. Wilson (2003), describing man's innate tendency to connect with nature and living things. These connections are fundamental to human well-being and happiness, emphasizing the importance of maintaining biodiversity and the natural environment to balance ecosystems and human life. This perspective is supported by various scholars, such as, Gregory Bateson (1987) Who proposed that the human mind is inherently connected to the larger ecological system? Stephen Robert K (1993) further it describes nine interrelated values that reflect man's connection to nature, ranging from naturalistic to ecological values that drive survival through exploration, to humane and moralistic values that drive social relations and environmental ethics. Here are several characteristics of Biophilic individuals: protective love and territorial attachment, empathy and connectivity, a sense of awe and appreciation for natural wonders.

The first is protective love and territorial attachment. The primary characteristic of biophilic individuals is their ability to develop protective territorial bonds with natural environments. Biophilic individuals do not merely protect nature passively, but also develop emotional ownership and protective responsibility toward a specific ecosystem. For example, when a biophilic individual might spend years exploring a particular forest and find that the forest is threatened by development, they might join environmental activism, engage in protests, or even engage in civil disobedience to defend the nature they love. The characteristics of the biophilic individual are also depicted in the conversation of two characters in the novel, namely:

-Havduke

"For the night and the wilderness belong to us. This is Indian country. Our country" (p. 52)

-Ms. Bonnie

She fell in love at first sight with the mountains and the desert. (p. 25)

The results of the intertextual analysis show a strong harmony between the concept and the novel footage, also showing a protective bond with nature and considering it as a "home" that must be protected. Hayduke says, for example, "For the night and the wilderness belong to us," which suggests territorial ties and emotional possession. In addition, Bonnie also experiences an instant bond with the landscape when "She falls in love at first sight with the mountains and the desert," which then develops into a long-term protective commitment. The concept of biophilia and protective bonds is supported by recent research by Lumber dkk (2017) ,who show individuals with strong nature connections tend to have strong pro-environmental behaviors and protective attitudes.

The second is empathy and connectivity. Biophilic individuals have a strong sense of compassion for fellow humans. For all forms of life, they also understand and feel the connection of all living beings, such as with the surrounding nature. Participating in social actions is one of the expressions of their empathy and connectivity. Biophilic individuals will get involved in social movements that fight for environmental justice. It shows their empathy for the damaged environment caused by some major government projects. From the characteristics of biophilic individuals depicted in the document. Sarvis' narrative, namely:

The crawler-tractors pushed them all over with nonchalant ease and shoved them aside, smashed and bleeding, into heaps of brush. No one knows precisely how sentient a pinyon pine is, for example, or to what degree such woody organisms can feel pain or fear. (p. 47)

The results of the intertextual analysis show a high alignment between the biophilic concept and Doc Sarvis's narrative. The narrative shows deep empathy for the suffering of plants and other living beings, as reflected in the sentence "The crawler-tractors pushed them all over with nonchalant ease and shoved... into heaps of brush," which shows empathy for the suffering of plants. In addition, the sentence "No one knows precisely how sentient a pinyon... such woody organisms can feel pain or fear" shows the characteristics of biophilia in acknowledging possible sensitivity in non-human living beings. The biophilic concept of empathy and connection is supported by the research of Stephen R. Kellert (2012), who states that direct interaction with nature can increase empathy and connection to the environment.

The last is a sense of awe and appreciation for natural wonders. Biophilic individuals have a deep understanding and admiration for the beauty and complexity of nature. They often feel joy and awe when interacting with nature. Examples include: Enjoying the small details in nature, biophilic individuals usually notice and admire small details that others may miss, such as patterns on leaves, the texture of tree bark, or the color of insects. This tends to make biophilic individuals feel joy and admiration. These characteristics are also depicted in one character in the novel, namely, Doc's narration. Sarvis:

But then, no two river trips were ever quite alike. The river, the canyon, the desert world was constantly changing, from moment to moment, from miracle to miracle, within the firm reality of Mother Earth. River, rock, sun, blood, hunger, wings, joy, this is the real. (p. 37)

The results of the intertextual analysis show a strong alignment between biophilia's concepts and Doc Sarvis's narrative. The narrative reveals a deep sense of awe for nature and the ability to capture small details that others might overlook. For example, the phrase "no two river trips were ever quite alike... from moment to moment, from miracle to miracle" shows that each experience in nature has unique and different dynamics, and that Smith was very sensitive to these small changes. The phrase "River, rock, sun, blood, hunger, wings, joy, this is the real" shows authentic awe. Rachel Carson (1956), supports this biophilia concept, which states that awe is a basic emotional response that nurtures our relationship with nature.

Furthermore, the biocentrism proposed by Paul W. Taylor is an environmental ethical framework that places all forms of life at the center of moral considerations, affirms that every living organism has inherent value and is entitled to respect regardless of its usefulness to humans, and challenges human supremacy by positioning humans as equal members of the earth's living community. Rolston (1988) expanded on Taylor's ideas by introducing the concept of systemic value in nature, arguing that value exists in individual organisms and broader ecological systems. At the same time, Gary Varner and Albert Schweitzer (1932) developed biocentric thinking through the concept of "biological importance" and the principle of "Reverence for Life," emphasizing that all life forms deserve equal moral respect. These thinkers constructed a robust theoretical framework for treating all living things as morally worthy entities, with biocentric individual characteristics including voluntary moderation, advocacy of natural rights, and appreciation of natural aesthetics.

The first character is voluntary moderation. Biocentric individuals often adhere to a simpler, more sustainable lifestyle, reducing their consumption and ecological impact. For example, when it comes to transportation, a biocentric person would prefer to walk, bike, or use public transportation rather than owning a private car. This is also illustrated in Ms. Bonnie's narrative, namely:

That girl was a walker, too. In lug-soled boots, an army shirt, and short pants, over the volcanoes west of town. She didn't own a car, but on her tenspeed bicycle, she sometimes pedaled all fifty miles north... for two or three nights at a time. (p. 31)

The results of the intertextual analysis show a strong alignment between the biocentric concept and its manifestation in Ms. Bonnie's character. Ms. Bonnie's character shows a simple and sustainable lifestyle by reducing consumption and ecological impact, especially by choosing environmentally friendly transportation such as walking, cycling, or public transportation. For example, the narrative suggests that Ms. Bonnie doesn't have a car and prefers to walk or bike, such as when she took a 50-mile bike trip to Santa Fe with camping gear. Textual details such as "lug-soled boots", "ten-speed bicycles", and solo camping expeditions create a vivid picture of the voluntary moderation that is part of his lifestyle. The opinion of Naess supports the concept. (1986) Biocentrist individuals will choose a simple lifestyle as a form of responsibility to minimize negative impacts on the environment and maintain the balance of global ecosystems.

The second is advocacy for nature rights. Biocentric individuals often support legal rights to nature, such as rivers, forests, and other ecosystems. A biocentric would tend to support and participate in movements that fight for the legal status of nature. For example, a biocentric will support and participate in movements that fight for the legal status of rivers, forests, or other

ecosystems. These characteristics are also found in the novel in the narrative of Hayduke, Ms. Bonnie, and Smith, namely:

But somebody was due for headaches in the morning when the sun came up and engines were fired up. All those little particles of sand, corrosive as powdered emery, began to wreak the earth's vengeance on the cylinder walls of the despoilers of the desert. (p. 55)

The results of the intertextual analysis show a complex relationship between theoretical concepts and literary representations in the characters of the three. Theoretical concepts emphasize advocacy through legal and legislative channels, while literary representations present a more radical approach through sabotaging industrial machinery to protect desert ecosystems. Although the methods used differ, the two approaches have the same philosophical foundation: nature has rights that must be protected. The description of their actions as "Earth's vengeance" suggests that these characters act as agents of nature, asserting their rights. The cooperation between actors in sabotage also shows the collective aspect of the natural rights advocacy movement, albeit through extralegal means.

The radical approach these characters take in defending the rights of nature through industrial sabotage is supported by the concept of "Earth Jurisprudence" developed by Cullinan (2011). This concept states that when an anthropocentric legal system fails to protect the Earth's communities, direct action to defend the rights of nature becomes a legitimate moral imperative. He argues that actions to protect these rights, even through extralegal means, can be justified as a form of "Defense of the Earth" that restores the balance of the legal system.

The last is appreciation for natural aesthetics. A biocentric individual has a deep appreciation for the beauty of nature in its many forms. For example, a biocentric person will choose to spend their free time with activities that allow them to enjoy the beauty of nature by doing activities that are directly in harmony with the surrounding environment, such as hiking, bird watching, camping, or nature photography. The activity is also described by four characters in the novel, namely:

"Time to make camp, folks," Smith announced, sculling for shore. Hayduke pitched in. Again, they heard the call of a canyon wren, a little bird with a big mouth. But musical. (p. 37)

Intertextual analysis shows a close relationship between the concept and the depiction of biocentric characters in novels, who are involved in various activities such as hiking, bird watching, and camping to experience the beauty of nature. Quotes like "Time to make camp, folks," and poetic descriptions of "slope of sand, fringed by thickets of coppery willow ... with lavender plumes nodding in the breeze" highlight a deep aesthetic appreciation, while the phrase "Again they heard the call of a canyon wren, a little bird with a big mouth. But musical" reflects the love for the auditory beauty of nature. All of this shows how the characters experience and appreciate the beauty of nature that is in harmony with the surrounding environment. The concept aligns with Carlson's (2009) statement focusing on an authentic aesthetic experience through a deep understanding of the scientific and ecological context, rather than just superficial visual perception. Biocentric aesthetic appreciation arises when individuals understand the environmental context of the beauty they witness.

CONCLUSION

The first aim of this study is to learn the theme of Edward Abbey's The Monkey Wrench Gang. The theme was found to be the struggle to conserve the environment threatened by the dam's construction. For the second research question the researchers discuss explicitly how the four main characters, representing different walks of life, manage to build unity in their environmental conservation efforts caused by their biophilic characteristics namely a protective love and territorial attachment, empathy and connectivity with nature, and admiration for the wonders of nature and biocentric characteristics namely voluntary simplicity, advocacy for natural rights, and appreciation for the aesthetics of nature.

The authors recommend investigating how contemporary environmental fiction compares to Abbey's work, constructing discourse and reader impact for future research. They suggest using reader response methodologies to measure how environmental narratives affect people's

ecological attitudes and behaviors, as current research focuses only on themes in Abbey's novel and the characters' shared environmental commitments.

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