

UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STUDIES

AN ECOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF *I LOVE ENGLISH* TEXTBOOKS 5-7

MA thesis

KRISTIINA KISLER

SUPERVISOR: *Prof.* RAILI MARLING

TARTU

2025

ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to determine how environmental topics are represented in *I Love English* textbooks 5-7 in the broader context of developing environmental education and critical language awareness in the EFL classroom. For this, an ecolinguistic analysis of the language features in the textbooks was conducted and the reoccurring ideologies identified. The analysis identified the presence of beneficial, destructive and ambivalent discourses about nature. Ways in which the destructive and ambivalent language choices could be addressed by the teacher were proposed, to support the development of critical language awareness.

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT.....	2
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	4
INTRODUCTION	5
1 ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN ELT AND ECOLINGUISTICS	8
1.1 Environmental education	8
1.2 Ecolinguistics.....	13
1.2.1 Destructive, ambivalent and beneficial discourses	17
1.2.4 Framing.....	20
1.2 Textbooks	22
1.3.1 Ecolinguistic research in ELT textbooks.....	23
2 ECOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN <i>I Love English 5-7</i>	25
2.1 Environmental topics in the <i>I Love English</i> textbooks	25
2.2 Method for the analysis.....	26
2.3 Destructive, ambivalent and beneficial discourses in ILE 5-7	28
2.3.1 Beneficial discourses	29
2.3.2 Destructive discourses	34
2.3.3 Ambivalent discourses	39
2.3.3.1 Solutions to counter climate change	45
2.3.3.2 Non-human animal characters with human characteristics	47
2.4 Discussion of results	48
CONCLUSION.....	53
REFERENCES	57
RESÜMEE.....	61

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL – English as a foreign language

ELT – English language teaching

ILE – I Love English

EE – Environmental education

INTRODUCTION

Climate change is among the most significant global challenges currently facing the planet (Mercer et al 2023). Given the slow global response and the escalating speed of the crisis (Deetjen and Ludwig 2021) future generations will need to face an increasingly critical climate situation (Kuttner 2019: 47). As education has a key role in the global fight against environmental degradation (Deetjen and Ludwig 2021) and English is often used as a global language for environmental discussion, environmental topics appear in the context of English language teaching (ELT) (Micalay-Hurtado and Poole 2022). In Estonia, the topic “Environment and sustainable development” is one of 8 cross curricular subjects in the national basic school curriculum for foreign languages:

Environment and sustainable development: ‘Estonia – My Home’. The aim is students’ development into socially active, responsible and environmentally conscious individuals who preserve and protect the environment and, valuing sustainability, are prepared to seek answers to issues related to environmental and human development (National Curriculum for Basic Schools, Appendix 2: Foreign languages 2011).

I Love English (ILE), a textbook series produced in Estonia for teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), is thus relevant for analyzing the representation of environmental topics in ELT in Estonia. As the latest editions of the textbooks were released before the most recent update of the national curriculum, they follow the 2011 version of the curriculum which prescribes the teaching of the environment, as could be seen above. Since the topic “Environment and sustainable development” is one of 8 cross curricular topics in the curriculum, and the aim of the textbooks is language teaching, the textbooks cannot be expected to give heightened attention to environmental topics. Thus, the focus in this thesis lies mainly in how these topics are represented not in how much environmental content the textbooks include. The better understanding of how environmental topics are represented can potentially help teachers think about how other cross-curricular topics appear and will help them guide students towards the reflection on the role of

language in shaping public perceptions. The role of critically evaluating information is also emphasized in the cross-curricular topic “Information environment”:

The aim is for the pupil to develop into an information-conscious person who senses and is aware of the surrounding information environment, is able to analyze it critically and acts according to his or her aims and society’s communication ethics (National Curriculum for Basic Schools 2011)

Almost all language use plays some kind of role in shaping how humans interact with other species and the environment (Stibbe 2024). Although language education helps students learn at least something about environmental discussions, previous research has revealed that English language teaching materials do not explicitly encourage participation in environmental protection (Jacobs and Goatly 2000). Since textbooks are consumed by a large audience over a long period of time, this shortcoming can influence the students’ attitudes towards environmental issues, their opinions and worldviews (Ajagán-Lester et al 2003: 219), as language can have a significant impact on the activities people take part in to protect the environment Jacobs (2017: 381).

In this thesis, an ecolinguistics approach will be used to uncover the potentially unequal power relations and underlying ideologies in the representations of humans and the ecosystem (Alexander and Stibbe 2014). Ecolinguistics combines ecology and linguistics to reveal the ideologically loaded meanings that certain linguistic features signal about the environment (Steffensen 2024). The aim of analyzing discourses from an ecolinguistics perspective is not merely uncovering the underlying ideologies in the discussion of the environment but also highlighting discourses that encourage a more balanced relationship between humans and the ecosystem (Stibbe 2012:4).

Although EFL materials have been extensively analyzed internationally, the research mostly features textbooks published by British or American publishers (Harwood 2014:1) and seldom tackles environmental issues (Smith and Sheyholislami 2022). More research is needed on local materials that are created in accordance with the local educational standards and that therefore

have an impact on how students in a country, like Estonia, will access information on socially relevant topics in their English classes. Although Mahlakõiv's (2014) report reveals that among Estonian EFL teachers, the topic "Environment and sustainable development" is taught more than any other cross-curricular topic, critical analysis of environmental discourse in EFL textbooks in Estonia is still lacking. Thus, the aim of this thesis is to determine how environmental topics are represented in *I Love English* textbooks 5-7. These textbooks have been analyzed quite extensively in previous student theses, as they are widely used in Estonian schools, but the representation of the environment has not yet been studied, to my knowledge. In this thesis, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. What kind of ideologies about the environment are embedded in the linguistic features of the texts and exercises in the textbooks?
2. To what extent do the textbooks include destructive, ambivalent or beneficial language choices in their representations of the environment?

In order to answer my research questions, I will first give an overview of environmental education and its implementation in ELT, the ecolinguistics approach to analyzing discourses, and the previous research with a focus on English language teaching. Then, I will analyze the environmental discourse in the ILE textbooks and discuss the role of EFL teaching and materials in promoting environmentally beneficial discourses.

1 ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN ELT AND ECOLINGUISTICS

This chapter provides an overview of environmental education and its implementation in the Estonian education system and in English language teaching. In addition, an introduction to the ecolinguistics approach to discourse analysis is given and a discussion of previous ecolinguistic research of textbooks in ELT is provided.

1.1 Environmental education

The main principles for including environment and sustainability in textbooks of any subject are derived from the broader concept of environmental education (EE) (Pizmony- Levy 2011). North American Association of Environmental Education (NAEE) defines environmental education as:

a process that helps individuals, communities, and organizations learn more about the environment, and develop skills and understanding about how to address global challenges. It has the power to transform lives and society. It informs and inspires. It influences attitudes. It motivates action (NAEE, n.a).

Environmental education first emerged at the end of the 20th century, and in 1976, the United Nations proposed six objectives for environmental education (UNESCO-UNEP, 1976):

1. Awareness of environmental problems.
2. Understanding of the environment, its problems, and the role of humans.
3. Concern about environmental problems.
4. Skills in dealing with and talking about environmental issues.
5. Critical evaluation of proposed solutions.
6. Participation.

EE is seen as a form of critical pedagogy, as it challenges ideas and behaviors that damage the environment (Jacobs 2017). Critical pedagogy involves questioning the status quo by students, teachers and other stakeholders but is often criticized for imposing world views on learners.

Crookes (2013: 179), however, emphasizes the importance of understanding how certain ideas are expressed as opposed to which viewpoints are expressed. Raising the question of what teachers should do when students seem uninterested in EE topics, Jacobs (2017) refers to previous research which has shown that students' personal interests do not necessarily coincide with a concern for ecological degradation. In accordance with critical pedagogy, the teachers should not impose their own worldviews upon students, and if necessary, should be ready to move on to other topics if students are uncomfortable (Jacobs 2017). Yet, it is also important to expose students to information that helps them develop into informed citizens. Thus, teachers should show students key social debates, including those about the environment, and call attention to how language is used in these debates to create norms.

Critical pedagogy stresses that critical thinking is essential in not only developing solutions to environmental problems but being critical about approaches and solutions that are considered natural in society (e.g., the belief in the necessity of eternal economic growth). In the learning and educational objectives in the Estonian national curriculum for basic schools (Estonian Ministry of Education and Research 2011), the development of intellectual curiosity and learning skills, as well as self-reflection and critical thinking are listed among the purposes of basic school education. In addition, one of the learning competences for students in grades 7-9 is: "14) thinks systematically, creatively and critically, is open to self-development" (National Curriculum for Basic Schools 2011). Many tools for promoting critical thinking have been developed, all of which involve language and can be employed in EE.

To critically assess the role of language in the process of environmental degradation, the concept of critical language awareness is applied (Steffensen 2024). In today's language teaching language is viewed as a means of communication and when communicating, choices about lexis,

grammar, register, discourse structure are made (Littlejohn 2000). For example, there is a difference if an armed group is called “terrorists” or “freedom fighters”, and in the sentence “Ten million pounds were lost last year”, one could ask “Who lost them? Why? How? What does “lost” mean?”. In EFL lessons, teachers can raise the students’ awareness of how language is used to achieve certain goals. (Littlejohn 2000)

Littlejohn (2000) has combined ideas for developing critical language awareness in ELT classrooms, which derive from the concept that language use involves making choices. He proposes tips that include asking the students questions such as “Why was that said? Why was that word used instead of another word? Why is that tense used? What is not said?”, asking students to decide if certain statements are negative, positive or neutral and to justify their decisions. For example, when reading a news story, students could be encouraged to think about how the story would change if someone else was reporting it, what the writer thinks of the reader and what in the writing suggests that. Another practical way of applying critical language awareness is encouraging students to question societal norms by discussing which words are typically used when talking about certain areas of life. For example, there are many words that are used when talking about women and men, which may affect the way that we think about people of different genders. (Littlejohn 2000) Similarly, Bellewes (2024) has created various nature related activities in the framework of critical language awareness to teach the learners how language can normalize attitudes towards the natural world.

Micalay-Hurtado and Poole (2022) have demonstrated how ecolinguistic critical language awareness can be applied in English language teaching by creating a set of writing assignments and activities for learners of English as a second language. Examples of assignments that can be used for this purpose include creating a social media platform to promote sustainability, critically

analyzing environmental discourse in scientific articles vs. nature poetry, and challenging unsustainable narratives by reframing song lyrics. The potential of implementing corpus-assisted activities in language teaching is also explored with inspiration from Poole (2016) where second language writers presented a keywords list derived from a corpus analysis of blog posts in a debate concerning the possible construction of a new mine. Through the analysis of the corpus-collected data, learners were able to identify and analyze how language choices were reflected in the values of and messages from the organizations involved in the debate (Micalay- Hurtado and Poole 2022).

Early experiences with EE can potentially shape the students' attitudes and actions towards the natural world (Torkar 2014). However, the integration of EE into ELT often meets challenges like insufficient time and resources, teachers' lack of knowledge of effective techniques, as well as the predetermined views of the students, educators and society (Gavilan et al 2024). The Berlin Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development (UNESCO 2022) proposes including environmental education in all national curricula by 2025 and ELT educators play a role in this worldwide commitment (Gavilan et al 2024). Integrating EE into language learning can positively influence language proficiency and deepen the understanding of environmental challenges, as well as motivate active engagement (Gavilan et al 2024). As discussed above, this can be done by promoting critical language awareness in the classroom, as well as by incorporating project-based learning, content and language integrated learning, corpus methods, and various communicative assignments designed to encourage students to reflect over the role of language in addressing societal and environmental issues, as well as their own contribution in addressing those issues.

In Estonia, EE is present both in the basic school and secondary school curriculum, as well as in several official education documents. The cross curricular topic "Environment and Sustainable Development" in the national basic school curriculum (Appendix 13, 2011) aims to

shape socially active, responsible and environmentally aware citizens. According to the national curriculum (Appendix 13, 2011), this is achieved by guiding the students to recognize nature as an interconnected system, comprehend the impact of human activities, appreciate diversity and sustainability, engage in environmental discussion and commit to sustainable practices. At the first stage, the study relies on the students' everyday experience, common phenomena and direct contact with nature. At the second stage, students are to be exposed to local environmental issues, and the third stage focuses on the interconnectedness of local and global environmental issues and larger human development problems (Estonian National Curriculum Appendix 13, 2011). These objectives align with the idea of ELT professionals developing learners' eco-critical language awareness by enabling them to challenge unsustainable discourses by identifying the linguistic patterns that normalize and reproduce these discourses (Micalay-Hurtado and Poole 2022).

Environmental sustainability is highlighted as one of the guidelines of Estonia's education strategy for 2021-2025 (Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, 2021: 29), which, among others, references the UN Sustainable Development Goals and The European Green Deal. In addition, the strategy mentions the General Principles of Climate Policy until 2050 (The Government of Estonia, 2017), emphasizing the importance of education in developing students' attitudes towards climate change, and proposing the introduction of a knowledge-, skills- and attitude-based approach to climate change at all levels of education (Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, 2021: 33). The education strategy also calls attention to The Climate Change Adaptation Development Plan until 2030 (Ministry of Climate, 2017), as the quality and level of education heavily affects society's readiness for the problems related to climate change.

1.2 Ecolinguistics

Language plays an important role in shaping public perceptions of the environment and linguists have proposed methods for analyzing representations of language. One of these tools is ecolinguistics, which Alexander and Stibbe (2014) define as follows:

The study of the impact of language on the life-sustaining relationships among humans, other organisms and the physical environment. It is normatively orientated towards preserving relationships which sustain life.

Ecolinguistics aims at making a practical difference in the world (Stibbe 2024). The recognition of the potential influence of language on human actions and attitudes towards the environment is closely related to the objectives of Environmental Education (Gavilan et al 2024) and ecolinguistic tools can be used in educational contexts when discussing environmental topics.

Ecolinguistics encompasses a variety of approaches with varying methods (Stibbe 2018: 499). Halliday's (2003: 164) systemic functional approach focuses on the aspects of English grammar which construct reality in a way that has a potentially negative impact on the ecosystem. Considered one of the earliest approaches to ecolinguistics (Steffensen 2024; Stibbe 2018: 499), Halliday (2003: 164) calls attention to features like the use of mass nouns for essential resources that do not reflect their limited supply, the inherent perception of bigger being better and the overwhelming agency of human beings over other species. However, this approach focuses solely on the grammatical aspects of language and does not take into account the varying language use of certain groups in society to achieve their goals (Stibbe 2018: 499).

Later researchers have taken a discourse approach to ecolinguistics. In this sense, ecolinguistics is considered a form of critical discourse analysis where a wider range of marginalized groups, including animals and future generations with depleting resources, and the impact of discourses on the ecosystems that all life depends on, are considered (Stibbe 2018: 499).

There are several common ways of defining discourse. At the most abstract level, discourse is language use as a social practice (Fairclough 2010: 92). Discourse can also be defined as language used in specific fields but in the most concrete sense, discourse refers to a way of speaking that conveys experiences from a specific perspective (Winther-Jørgensen and Phillips 2002:66). Discourses are ways of using language that represent a particular type of reality and construct specific models of the objects being spoken of (Stibbe 2012:3). Consisting of linguistic and semiotic features used by certain groups in society (Alexander and Stibbe 2014), discourses are realized through a range of genres and texts that over time solidify the particular ideas being spoken of (Reisigl and Wodak 2016: 27). Discourses are considered textual representations of social practices (van Leeuwen 2008:6; Reisigl and Wodak 2016:6; Machin 2013; Winther-Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 61; Fairclough 2010: 92). As social practices both shape discourses and are shaped by them, certain discursive practices can over time have ideological implications and social consequences (Reisigl and Wodak 2016:6; Winther-Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 63; Fairclough 2010: 92). Thus, a critical analysis of discourses can help to uncover their potential ideological consequences (Machin 2013).

An ecolinguistic analysis is particularly effective for revealing how linguistic features cluster together to model the world in particular ways. For example, common discourses in the animal industry portray animals as objects by referring to them using the pronoun “it”, representing them as machines, and using the passive form to hide the agent of killing (Stibbe 2012:5). Various linguistic features appear in different discourses, depending on the context. For example, the pronoun “it” in industry texts may be a part of a discourse where animals are objectified, while in another text, it could represent a discourse of empathy and respectful distance (Stibbe 2012:5).

For ecolinguistics to fulfill its goal of revealing the potential impact of certain discourses on society and the ecosystem, Alexander and Stibbe (2014) emphasize the importance of analyzing any discourses, not just those that are explicitly about the environment, within an ecological framework, as they have the potential to influence people's behavior in ways that damage or preserve ecological systems (Alexander and Stibbe 2014).

In one of the most comprehensive recent works in discourse-oriented ecolinguistics by Stibbe (2021), several theoretical approaches are applied to critically analyze various genres of texts, including textbooks. To reveal patterns in the way that language is used in texts, Stibbe (2021: 30) suggests focusing on the following linguistic aspects:

- vocabulary (e.g., connotations of words, pronoun use, modals such as 'might' or 'must')
- relationships between words (e.g., synonymy, antonymy or hyponymy)
- grammatical structures (e.g., active vs passive, nominalization)
- assumptions and presuppositions embedded in clauses
- relationships between clauses (e.g., reason, consequence, purpose)
- how events are represented (e.g., abstractly or concretely)
- how participants are represented (e.g., as individuals or an aggregated mass)
- figures of speech (e.g., irony, metaphor, metonymy).

These linguistic devices cluster together to form ideologies (Stibbe 2012: 20). Van Dijk (1997: 25) defines ideology as a way of thinking and acting established by dominant groups to reproduce and legitimize their power, making ideology the link between discourse and society. Ideology is often manifested implicitly, by basing discourses on assumptions that are treated as if they were common sense but, instead, serve to maintain unequal power relations (Stibbe 2012:

20). Ideologies can influence the shared mental representations of individuals in society (van Dijk 1997: 27), and eventually their attitudes and actions towards the environment (Stibbe 2012: 21). Ideologies manifest in discourses, that is, in linguistic features that are used by members of a group (Stibbe 2021: 17). Thus, the analysis of environmental discourse in textbooks can help uncover the ideologies embedded in the language and their potential effect on the attitudes of the students.

The approach of critically analyzing discourse has been extensively criticized. Bartlett (2017: 136) claims that studies often do not take into account the factors behind the production of texts and do not include discussions about social realizations or possible practical steps that could be taken to achieve their aim of creating a social change. Breeze (2011) emphasizes the limitations of discourse analysis in interpreting people's behavior based on language choices. To interpret the possible social consequences of discourses, various social theories would be needed, which is often out of scope and specialty of the analyst and could complicate the analysis from a theoretical and a practical standpoint (Breeze 2011). In addition, the often small and selective choice of lexical tools that are analyzed can lead to results that are subjective and align with the analyst's pre-determined ideologies (Bartlett 2017; Breeze 2011). This can be addressed by making the principles of choosing the materials and tools for analysis as explicit as possible for the reader, as well as motivating them on the basis of previous research. In regard to analyzing textbooks, the specific limitations of the genre have to be addressed, as certain language choices are made for academic, not ideological, purposes. The potential steps that could be taken in the context of ELT to address the specific language choices and the discourses they create, as well as the possible ways of interpreting certain choices, should be discussed, as this aligns with the principles of critical language awareness and EE.

1.2.1 Destructive, ambivalent and beneficial discourses

Cultures and societies are structured by a range of dominant discourses used in particular situations (Stibbe 2012:6). In ecolinguistics, the dominant discourses can be divided into beneficial, destructive or ambivalent ones (Stibbe 2024). To determine which discourses the ideologies create, they are assessed against framework that combines ethical, social and environmental principles. Stibbe (2021: 15) proposes a comprehensive ethical framework that encompasses the value of all living beings, the wellbeing of both present and future generations, human consumption within environmentally sustainable limits, social justice in the distribution of resources, the acknowledgement and preparation for inevitable ecological changes, as well as empathy, regret and gratitude for the harm inevitably caused to other beings, as opposed to viewing them as inferior or as resources. These ethics align with the principles of EE, as well as the Estonian National Curriculum (Appendix 13, 2011).

In destructive discourses often economic growth is prioritized over the wellbeing of all species, ambivalent discourses have an environmentalist goal but may still be politically or commercially influenced, and beneficial discourses convey ideas which encourage active participation in protecting the ecosystem (Stibbe 2021: 25). Destructive discourses often go unnoticed because they are considered “natural”, as the way that things are. Thus, they should be first discussed to show how they construct a partial perspective as the common sense one, before proposing new, more ecologically beneficial discourses (Stibbe 2012:6).

Destructive discourses are characterized by linguistic choices that present nature as a passive object to be used by humans. Using the word “animal” in an opposition with humans can potentially distance human beings from other animals and the surrounding ecosystem, as the semantic meaning frequently does not include humans (Stibbe 2012: 23). Additionally, the

opposition of “us” and “them” is created by using the pronouns “we”, “us”, and “our” that only refer to humans, creating a distance between human beings and the natural world. Furthermore, nature and animals are commonly referred to as “it” rather than “him” or “her”, which can objectify them in certain contexts, make them seem inanimate or even thing-like and reinforce the assumption that nature is property (Stibbe 2012: 25).

The ideological assumption that each animal is representative of a category is reinforced by the use of mass nouns, instead of count nouns, and by using abstract categorizations of animals and plants instead of actual names for animals and plants, like “animals”; “living things”, “mammals”. According to Stibbe (2012: 24), this diminishes the value of the animals and makes it easier to justify their exploitation and destruction. In addition, the use of metonymical expressions (for example, by referring to an animal by their function, like the word “breeder”) when referring to them can contribute to the ideology of seeing nature as a resource. This disregards the suffering of animals, as inanimate resources are perceived to be incapable of suffering (Stibbe 2012: 29).

Stibbe (2012: 23) classifies the use of some conventional metaphors that include animals, like “being a chicken” and “monkeying around”, as destructive because they have developed multiple meanings over time, which often can be negative towards animals. Idioms that refer to animals also tend to describe negative situations or contain images of cruelty, for example “the straw that broke the camel’s back”, “talking the hind legs off a donkey” (Stibbe 2012: 23). According to Stibbe (2012: 24), the only positive idioms describe wild birds and insects, for example, “an early bird,” “free as a bird” or “wise as an owl”. Here, Stibbe (2012: 24) sees a pattern in how the closer the relation of dominance of a particular species by humans is, the more negative the stereotypes contained in the idioms.

It is possible to see how nature is represented by looking at the transitivity of clauses, which refers to how a speaker describes actions and experiences and includes the arrangement of processes and participants in a clause (Stibbe 2021: 33). Halliday (2013: 213) distinguishes between material, mental and verbal processes, where different participants are involved in every process. Material processes involve an actor who is the doer of the activity, and the affected who is having something done to them. Mental processes include a senser who is feeling or thinking, and a phenomenon – what is being perceived. Analyzing transitivity in clauses can show if nature is represented in an active or passive way. Destructive discourses can also be realized by modality. High modality is expressed through direct utterances and categorical adverbs such as “always prefer” or “never satisfied”, while low modality is characterized by the use of hedging tools (Stibbe 2021: 35). Modality can be used in various ways depending on the context of the text, to promote destructive, ambivalent or beneficial discourses.

Discourses that fall between destructive and beneficial are considered ambivalent. Ambivalent discourses are on the one hand consistent with the proposed ethical framework and have a positive aim of dealing with some ecological aims but there are inconsistencies or conflicts, as they may be influenced by political or commercial interests (Stibbe 2015). Ambivalent discourses include the discursive tools used in destructive discourses but can also promote environmentally beneficial behavior, for example the discourse of zoos, which emphasizes the connection with nature and conservation but isolates animals as “others” to be gazed at and profited from (Stibbe 2021: 26). Because Stibbe’s main focus is on destructive discourses, not as many specific language markers for ambivalent discourses are discussed, which leaves the analyst with a considerable amount of freedom in identifying them.

Discourses that align with the ethical framework and encourage ecological thinking are considered beneficial discourses (Stibbe 2018: 500) that can be identified by searching for ideologies that can encourage the protection of the systems that support life (Stibbe 2021: 26). In beneficial discourses, nature is represented as worthy in its own right instead of as a metaphor for something else and various parts of the ecosystem are appreciated and not valued only for their size or usefulness (Stibbe 2012: 148). Beneficial discourses focus on encounters with nature in natural settings, rather than mediated by zoos or linguistic abstractions (Stibbe 2012: 150) and animals and plants are given the roles of the agent or the senser in material and mental processes (Stibbe 2012: 151). Stibbe (2021) characterizes beneficial discourses by comparing them to destructive ones, for example contrasting the domesticated, processed and passive nature to the representation of nature as much more active and alive, where rivers, animals and landscapes are actors or sayers (Stibbe 2021: 27).

This distinction between discourses is made because the final stage of ecolinguistic analysis depends on the type of discourse that is identified. Destructive discourses are to be resisted by raising awareness of their harm (Stibbe 2021: 35). In the case of ambivalent discourses, their positive aspects are preserved while calling attention to their problematic features (Stibbe 2021: 26). The use of the specific linguistic devices that create beneficial discourses is to be encouraged (Stibbe 2021: 29).

1.2.4 Framing

A great deal of research in the field of ecolinguistics shows that ecological issues are cognitively structured by frames and metaphors which affect how we think about and act towards the environment. A frame is a set of associations that are connected to and evoked by certain words,

for example the word “tree” might create thoughts of birds or nature (Blackmore and Holmes 2013: 14). Although frames are individual for every person, they are often shared by people with similar experiences in a community, for example students studying in the same society at the same time (Stibbe 2021: 41).

Blackmore and Holmes (2013: 42) have investigated how frames provoke environmentally beneficial values and contain a concern for others, or environmentally destructive values, which focus on profit, status and concern for oneself. To find out which values UK conservation organizations promote through their communications and campaigns, and to ensure the values the sector cultivates inspire action (Blackmore and Holmes 2013: 12), they have combined the approaches of corpus linguistics and discourse analysis to analyze a large amount of data.

Stibbe (2021) has proposed his own ecolinguistics approach to analyzing frames, which is suitable for qualitatively analyzing smaller amounts of data. To analyze frames from an ecolinguistics perspective, the target domain – a general topic being talked about – and the source frame, a different idea of life that is evoked through “trigger words” from that area are identified (Stibbe 2021: 47). For example, using words like “beneficial”, “resource”, “generate”, “profit” that belong to the source frame of economy, when talking about the target domain of conservation creates the frame “Nature conservation is a commercial transaction”. Environmentally beneficial frames include discovery, working together, beauty in nature and connection with nature, while environmentally destructive frames include selling conservation as a product and ecosystems services which put a price on nature (Stibbe 2018: 50).

1.2 Textbooks

Textbooks are specifically written for learning purposes and therefore have a significant role in shaping students' views (vom Hau 2009). They can be instrumental in creating hegemony in society and legitimizing certain perspectives while leaving out others (Ajagán-Lester et al 2003: 219), as they shape the values, knowledge and ideals of students (Macgilchrist 2018: 525). Thus, a critical analysis of textbooks offers valuable information on the knowledge, identities and power-relations that are perceived as legitimate or desirable (Ajagán-Lester et al 2003: 219).

The importance of the textbook in ELT is significant, as research suggests that textbooks and other materials are relied upon heavily to drive the education process (Vitta 2021). Although there is a potentially considerable difference between classroom activities and textbook content, teachers often rely on textbooks when preparing for lessons. Textbook contents are regularly reinterpreted by teachers, and it is therefore important to look at the content to alert teachers about the potential need to address the ideologies contained in the textbooks, to avoid blindly reproducing them (vom Hau 2009).

Textbooks are produced through a complex process which can involve many institutions, individuals and perspectives resulting in a material which represents the collectively accepted way of speaking in a given time (Macgilchrist 2018: 525). Textbooks are produced by actors with societal interests and treated in society as indicators for what students should know (vom Hau 2009). They also give us a sense of what is considered common sense with regard to a topic area in a society at a given time.

Previous critical discourse studies of textbooks define textbooks as cultural and political practices that constitute the complex process of reaching the future generations with a certain understanding of reality (Macgilchrist 2018: 525). The strengths of a critically analyzing discourse

in textbooks is that it is possible to extract the semantic, argumentative and lexicogrammar patterns that construct knowledge and address the readers in a particular way, while also revealing bigger conceptual issues such as the role of individual human agency in combating environmental destruction (Macgilchrist 2018: 525).

1.3.1 Ecolinguistic research in ELT textbooks

According to Steffensen (2024), ecolinguistics' goal of affecting people's thoughts and behaviors is especially significant in educational contexts, where power relations between various societal groups are often shaped. In addition, educational materials as a genre are encountered by most literate people during their lifetime (Steffensen 2024). The most dominant ecolinguistics research in the educational field concerns EFL teaching (Steffensen 2024).

When it comes to the topic of environment and sustainability in EFL textbooks, previous research has shown that textbooks in ELT might not include a sufficient number of environmental topics (Kirova and Veselinovska 2004), do not explicitly encourage participation in environmental protection (Jacobs and Goatly 2000, Xiong 2014, Tryono et al 2023), and do not encourage students to reflect on their behavior regarding the environment (Stibbe 2004). The inclusion of environmental issues in textbooks in ELT has become more popular but the teaching materials are often filled with shallow environmentalism where the underlying practices resulting in environmental problems are not challenged, and no alternatives are proposed (Stibbe 2004, Xiong 2014, Cristovão et al 2022). In contrast to focusing on the individual's responsibility in protecting the environment, some research has highlighted the importance of representing broader political and economic factors in tackling environmental issues (Macgilchrist 2018: 528; Xiong 2014).

Most recently, Mercer et al (2023) show that many teachers choose to not use a coursebook when addressing environmental issues, as textbooks offer limited support for teaching environmental issues. Mahlakõiv (2014) reports that although topics related to EE are found in most coursebooks used in Estonia, teachers tend to source the materials for teaching the cross-curricular topic from the internet, which motivates the analysis of the topic in textbooks.

The reported isolation of environmental topics in coursebooks (Mercer et al 2023), combined with shallow environmentalism (Stibbe 2004), and lack of encouragement for participation (Jacobs and Goatly 2000) may shape the discussion of environmental issues in the EFL classroom (Mercer et al 2023) and suggests that both students and teachers need to develop a critical awareness of the textbooks used in EFL classes (Stibbe 2004; Mercer et al 2023). In this thesis, the representation of environmental topics is analyzed in the broader context of identifying possible ways of developing critical language awareness in the EFL classroom.

2 ECOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN *I Love*

English 5-7

In this chapter, the textbooks chosen for the analysis are described and the overall distribution of the environmental topics in them is presented. To uncover the ideologies in the text, as well as the discourses they make up, an ecolinguistics analysis of the materials will follow. Finally, a discussion of the often-occurring linguistic choices will be provided.

2.1 Environmental topics in the *I Love English* textbooks

Following Stibbe's (2021: 30) suggested method for ecolinguistic analysis, I began the analysis by collecting a selection of texts for analysis. The *I love English* (ILE) textbook series consists of seven textbooks that are used for teaching English as a foreign language from grades 3-9 in Estonian basic schools. In this thesis, I will analyze the ILE textbooks 5-7 that are used in classes 7-9 in Estonian middle schools. Each textbook consists of 20 units and includes materials to develop the students' listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills. Produced in Estonia, they follow the Estonian National Curriculum (Estonian Ministry of Education and Research 2011) which identifies the environment as one of the cross-curricular topics. Although it is often recommended that textbooks and workbooks should be analyzed as a set, the workbooks were excluded from this thesis, as they are largely made up of grammar exercises, which do not include sufficient linguistic material for detailed ecolinguistic analysis.

To get an overview of the textbooks, I analyzed all three editions of ILE textbooks 5-7 to identify all units and texts that include environmental issues or nature and marked them in an Excel spreadsheet. As recommended by Alexander and Stibbe (2014), both texts that explicitly refer to environmental issues and protection, and texts where the environment is not the main topic but

that in some other way mention the environment or contain reference to nature were included. For example, both a text about going on a vacation to a naturally beautiful spot and a text about the disappearance of the lynx are incorporated in the analysis material. The results of this preliminary analysis show that there are twice as many units that in some ways refer to the environment in the newest editions of the textbooks than in the two previous editions.

	Texts related to nature	Units containing material that refers to nature/aspects of the environment)	Units containing an explicit reference to environmental issues and protection
ILE 5 (2001)	9	7	1
ILE 5 (2008)	10	6	1
ILE 5 (2016)	12	12	2
ILE 6 (2002)	4	2	1
ILE 6 (2009)	4	2	1
ILE 6 (2017)	6	6	0
ILE 7 (2003)	5	5	0
ILE 7 (2010)	5	5	1
ILE 7 (2018)	10	10	2

As the number of topics that refer to environment has increased with every edition and is at its highest in the newest editions, a more detailed analysis of the language used to portray these topics will be conducted on the 2016, 2017 and 2018 editions of books 5-7 in the textbook series.

2.2 Method for the analysis

To identify patterns in the way that language is used in the textbooks and to determine if the textbooks include destructive, beneficial or ambivalent discourses, I will conduct an ecolinguistics analysis of the texts identified in the table above that contain substantive material

for a detailed linguistic analysis (for details see section 2.3 below). For that, I will look at the texts and exercises on a word and clause level, focusing on vocabulary choices, pronoun use, modality, synonymy, active and passive structures and nominalization. After that, I will look for assumptions and presuppositions, and reason, consequence and purpose in the clauses. I will also address if the events in the texts are represented abstractly or concretely, how participants are represented, and which figures of speech are used.

An analysis of these language features will help me find patterns in how they are used and enable me to determine the ideologies these features convey. To uncover how the environment is framed in the textbooks, I will focus on vocabulary choices to identify the “trigger words” that surround the target domain of environmental topics but originally belong to other fields. Identifying various ways of framing the environment will contribute to the identification of the ideologies in the texts and to the discourses that they create. Because none of the ideologies revealed through the analysis of the language elements can objectively be called good or bad (Stibbe 2021: 31), they are assessed against the principles of EE. As every discourse has positive and negative aspects (Stibbe 2021: 31), I will consider how the discourse as a whole aligns with these principles.

After the distinction between beneficial, destructive and ambivalent discourses is made, the final stage of the analysis will consist of addressing the discourses. Potential means for resisting destructive discourses will be proposed by recommending how teachers can highlight the language choices creating these discourses and approach the materials in ways that offer alternative ways of talking about the environment. The positive aspects of the ambivalent discourses will be highlighted and ways in which teachers can address their problematic aspects by creating

beneficial ways of talking about the environment will be offered. When it comes to beneficial discourses, the reproduction of them by the teacher and the students will be encouraged.

2.3 Destructive, ambivalent and beneficial discourses in ILE 5-7

In this chapter, the texts that cover nature and the environment will be analyzed by identifying the linguistic features that recur in them and the ideologies embedded in them. The texts include texts (14) but also exercises (20), tasks (2) and chants (2), to capture the different ways in which students can be addressed. Because none of the analyzed texts only belonged to one specific discourse, the analysis is presented by discourse with examples from various texts and exercises in the textbooks.

The materials that are included in the final analysis are:

	Name of the material	Unit	Page	Type
ILE 5 (2016)	“The Butterfly Life Cycle”	3	26	Text
	“Advice from a caterpillar”	3	23	Text
	“How the camel got his hump”	6	39	Text
	“The cyclone” by L. Frank Baum	7	46, 47	Text
	“Royal Ascot”	9	58	Text
	1)“Work in pairs. Read the sayings. Match the sayings with their explanations”	14	83	Exercise
	4b)“Work in groups. Ask and answer the questions. Give some extra information.”	14	85	Exercise
	10)“Work in groups. Make a poster about a natural beauty spot around your home town/ village. Search the internet for some interesting information. Draw some pictures and/ or include some photos”	14	88	Task
	5)“Describe the garden work that needs to be done so that you can grow and eat cucumbers. Point out what	17	101	Exercise

	tools you need for each step. Listen to the sample beginning.”			
	13)“Work in groups. Ask and answer the questions. Give some extra information.”	17	105	Exercise
	“Life in 2050”	19	111	Text
	8) “Work in groups. Ask and answer the questions. Add some extra information.”	19	114	Exercise
ILE 6 (2017)	4)“Work in groups. Choose one of the unusual activities below. Think of a funny explanation for the situation using some of the adjectives from exercise 3.”	11	68	Exercise
	“Travel”	16	95- 102	Exercises (11), texts (5), chants (1)
	1) “Listen and Chant”	19	117	Chant
	7) “Match the parts of the sentence. Then listen and check”	19	121	Exercise
	10) “Prepare a talk. Pretend that you could be a tree”	19	122	Task
ILE 7 (2018)	“10 interesting things about air”	2	17	Text
	8) “Answer the questions”	2	19	Exercise
	11) ”Work in groups and answer the questions”	2	20	Exercise
	“Bringing the lynx back to Britain”	17	107	Text
	“Beavers boost wetlands”	17	109	Text

2.3.1 Beneficial discourses

Beneficial discourses are characterized by pronoun use that can signal the connection between humans and the natural environment, contributing to the ideology of humans being an interconnected part of the natural environment. For example, in the text “10 interesting things about air” (ILE 7, 2018: 17), people are considered among “all other animals” as they are unified

by the common need for breathing: “People need to breathe, and so do all other animals”. In the following sentence this idea is expanded: “During respiration, a living thing takes in oxygen from the air and gives out carbon dioxide. This process helps to give animals and plants the energy to eat, grow, and live.” The phrase “living thing” is used to refer to living organisms, making it clear that the term involves human animals, non-human animals and plants. In the sentence “When humans and animals breathe, they give off an odorless gas called carbon dioxide, or CO₂.”, the pronoun “they” includes both animals and humans. The connection between human animals and plants is further emphasized in the sentence: “Plants use this gas, along with sunlight, to make food – and oxygen too because they, like humans, need to eat.”, showing that plants are active parts of the ecosystem that have needs “like humans”. Highlighting the similarities between humans and other organisms can potentially encourage empathy towards these organisms and encourage attitudes that work towards protecting the ecosystem, aligning with the principles of EE.

Another characteristic of beneficial discourses in the textbooks is natural organisms having an active participant role in a sentence. This language device contributes to the ideology that nature is a conscious being. For example, the text “10 interesting things about air” (ILE 7, 2018: 17) contains the following sentences: “During respiration, a living thing takes in oxygen from the air and gives out carbon dioxide. This process helps to give animals and plants the energy to eat, grow, and live.” Because plants and all animals are given an active role by using the verbs “eat”, “grow” and “live” that one would usually see as very human actions, the symbiotic relationship between humans and nature is emphasized. In the following section, agency is given to “living things” and “microbes” who “make homes” and “can travel”:

Lots of living things make their homes in soil and water. But did you know that living organisms can also be found hanging out in the air? These tiny microbial organisms are called bioaerosols. Although these microbes can't fly, they can travel long distances through the air – via wind, rain, or even a sneeze.

Using the word “home” to describe the habitats of organisms can create a parallel between the organisms and people who also have homes. Similarly, the particles are described as having a home and air has an active role as it “moves”, “carries” and “picks up”: “And as the wind picks up seeds and dust and other particles, it can carry them miles away from their original home.” Another example of animals having agency can be found throughout the text “The Butterfly Life Cycle” (ILE 5 2016: 26) where the butterflies’ active participant role is illustrated by the verb phrases “goes through” “needs to eat and grow”, “needs to reproduce”, “lays eggs”, “grows”, “makes itself a chrysalis”, “changes”, “emerges”, “will pump”, “wills search for a mate”, “lay their eggs”. These word choices contribute to the ideology of nature as a conscious being, creating a beneficial discourse. This example can also be found in the text “Beavers boost wetlands”(ILE 7, 2018: 109): “Wetlands exist all over the world, and they attract all sorts of creatures, including birds, fish, frogs, and insects”. Nature is given agency, as wetlands “exist” and “attract”. In addition, specific animal species are named in the text, which, according to Stibbe (2012), emphasizes the individuality of animals and contributes to the ideology of nature as a conscious being. Although active verbs are potentially used to avoid passive constructions because of the language level of the textbooks, it contributes to the creation of a beneficial discourse.

Halliday (2001: 194) has claimed that in the English language, it is not possible to grant agency to the forest, as it would be unsuitable to ask, “What’s the forest doing?” and the formulation is not found in the Corpus of Contemporary American English. Thus, responses like “The forest is holding water” or “It’s cleaning the air”, that align with scientific thinking and ecological conceptualization of nature, would not be possible (Poole 2016). However, in an exercise in ILE 6 (2017: 121), where the students are instructed to match sentences about what trees do, trees are portrayed as the active participants in the processes in every sentence. Trees

“help fight climate change”, “provide oxygen”, “help prevent soil erosion”, “absorb pollutant gases”, “cool the streets in the cities”, “provide wood for building houses”, “can have a healing effect on people”, “can bring together communities, “provide fuel for heating”. The importance of trees for both humans and for the ecosystem is considered and the question “What are trees doing?” can be asked. The active role of trees in these sentences can contribute to the idea that trees are alive and conscious beings, which can potentially encourage empathy and the active protection of trees, therefore creating the ideology of nature as a conscious being.

Another possible way of promoting empathy towards natural beings is through imagining oneself in their position. This is seen in a task where the students are instructed to “Prepare a talk. Pretend that you could be a tree” (ILE 6, 2017: 122) with some key words and phrases that are provided: “absorb”, “help”, “provide”, “prevent”, “shield”, “grow”, “keep” and “If I could be a tree, I’d choose to be a ...”, “I’d like to grow...”. All of these words, used as active verbs with the subject “tree”, would give an active role to the tree, thus contributing to the ideology of nature being a conscious being and potentially creating empathy amongst the students towards trees.

All three textbooks include exercises that are beneficial in the way that they use language but may need some attention from the teacher to guide the students to the various ways of interpreting this language use. In ILE 6 (2017: 68), the students have to think of funny explanations to given situations, for example to the sentence “You are sitting in a cage at the zoo.” The students can imagine themselves in the place of the gorilla which could lead to a discussion about the way that the students would feel if they had to sit in a cage like an animal at the zoo. With guidance from the teacher, this could create empathy toward animals in cages and lead to a discussion about both the beneficial and harmful effects of zoos. Unit 14 in ILE 5 (2016: 83), begins with some idiomatic sayings that include the word “water”. One of the sayings, “We never miss the water till

the well runs dry”, is about realizing the importance of something when it is gone, but is directly related to the depletion of water as a resource. Through an ecolinguistics lens, this saying could be interpreted as a reflection of how the depletion of this resource is not recognized as a problem worldwide and is often excluded from the debate about climate change and the possible consequences that societies might have to face in the future. This saying could inspire the teacher to facilitate a discussion about the literal meanings of the sayings, along with the idiomatic ones.

Additional exercises that can potentially encourage the students to reflect on sustainable living practices can be found in unit 17 “Garden” (ILE 5, 2016: 99) that covers vocabulary related to gardening, various garden tools, activities one can do in the garden and produce that can be grown in a garden. A speaking exercise (ILE 5, 2016: 101) where students are instructed to “describe garden work that needs to be done so that you can grow and eat cucumbers.”, can support the idea of self-sufficient gardening because phrases and words related to starting your own garden are used. Students’ previous experiences with gardening are discussed in a series of questions (ILE 5 2016: 105) at the end of the unit. For example, “Does your family have a vegetable garden?”, “Does anybody in your family like gardening?”, “How much time do you spend in the garden?”, “What garden tools have you ever used?”. These questions can work as a way of creating interest in students who have no experience in gardening or as a way of reflecting over one’s experience with gardening as an activity. Other questions like “Does your family get any income from gardening?”, “Do you think gardening is good for your health?”, “What kind of vegetables does your family buy at the supermarket?”, “Where are fruits and vegetables cheaper – at the supermarket or at the farmer’s market?” and “Have your parents bought vegetables or fruit directly from farmers?” can facilitate a discussion about the implications of buying local or imported produce and the ecological impact mass production of crops can have.

In exercise 11 in ILE 7 (2018: 20) in questions about air pollution, the role of the individual student in contributing to pollution is directly addressed: “What do you do that adds to air pollution in your home town?”, “What can you do to help reduce air pollution?”. Posing questions that directly address the student with the pronoun “you” calls attention to the responsibility of the individual student for polluting practices and creates an opportunity to propose specific steps individuals can take to reduce air pollution in their home areas. Similarly, the students’ individual role in reducing air pollution is explored through a presentation about the air quality in their home town (ILE 7, 2018: 20). Students are presented with phrases that they can use: “How can air quality in my home town be improved”, “How can students help?”, “How can residents contribute?”, “What should the local government do?”. These questions address the student directly by using the pronoun “my”, and nouns like “students” or “residents” and at the same time emphasize the responsibility of different stakeholders — the students, residents and the local government. This exercise has the potential to encourage students to reflect on their own attitudes and actions towards the environment while proposing possible solutions to topical problems around them, which directly aligns with the principles of EE.

2.3.2 Destructive discourses

Destructive discourses in the ILE textbooks are characterized by the passive participant role of animals, which can objectify them and contribute to the ideology that nature is a resource. For example, in the text “Royal Ascot” (ILE 5, 2016: 58), where the famous horse racing event is introduced, horses appear in the text 3 times and have a passive participant role. In the sentence “Every June, about 300,000 people in the UK go to watch eighteen horse races over five days”, horses are in the role of the phenomenon that is being viewed by the people, as a means of

entertainment that can also result in the economic gain for some people. In the next sentence “According to tradition, the Queen, her family, and guests arrive at the racetrack in horse-drawn carriage”, horses are used as modifier for the noun “carriage” and portrayed as the instrument for the royal family to arrive at the event. Again, they are used for human gain and entertainment. In the third sentence “The famous races attract the best horses, jockeys, and trainers from around the world.”, the horses are in the role of the affected. The phrase “The famous races attract the best horses” creates the illusion that the horses themselves have chosen to be in the race because of the popularity of the event, when in fact, they are chosen by humans because of their strength and velocity. As demonstrated in the previous sentences, horses in this text are portrayed in the passive role and as the instrument for human gain, thus forming the ideology “nature as a resource”. Although the Royal Ascot is an important part of British culture and thus worth including in a textbook, the vocabulary choices in this text frame horse racing as a glamorous fashion event, without acknowledging the possible implications for the horses, with words like “prize”, “highly popular”, “famous”, “glamorous”, “display of stylish hats”, “real sight” used to describe the event. To align with the principles of EE, the teacher could draw the students’ attention to the lack of consideration for the well-being of the horses in the text and facilitate a discussion about the consequences this might have both on the language level and in real life.

Destructive discourses in the analyzed textbooks are also characterized by “erasure”, which according to Stibbe (2021) appears when an area of life is considered unimportant or unworthy and thus, not represented at all or pushed to the background in the text. An example of this can be found in ILE 6, unit 16 “Travel” (2017: 95), where the topic of travelling is explored. The unit begins with a dialogue and some exercises about travelling on a plane to acquaint the students with travel-related vocabulary. However, no reference is made to the environmental consequences that

travelling by plane has and no other, more sustainable ways of travelling are discussed, apart from the word “double decker train” that appears in one of the texts. Another example of erasure of the environment can be found in the text “Life in 2050” (ILE 5 2016: 111), where the future of the world is discussed and the ideology of human centered environmentalism or anthropocentrism is created by describing ecological damage only in terms of the impact on humans (Stibbe 2004). The text describes the possible future of the world and focuses on the rising population of the earth. Many instances of the pronoun “we” are used: “What will our life be like forty years from now?”, “Lots of predictions suggests that we will live in a very different world”, “In order to feed a population of 9.6 billion, the world will need to increase its food production by an average of 60 per cent compared to how much we produce today”. Although this can be a means of talking about this topic without being too general or avoiding the use of the passive voice, the pronoun can also be used to include the reader to convey the ideologies being talked about, as if the reader already agreed with them. In addition, the pronoun “we” in this text seems to only include human beings and no other organisms appear in the text. Another example of erasure occurs in the sentences “The average age will be much higher than it is at the moment” and “By 2050, one in every six people on earth will be over 65.” The use of the modal auxiliary verb “will” can be used to express high certainty and imply that something is a fact. Although the political and social implications of the ageing population do create challenges in providing sufficient healthcare for all citizens, the section fails to mention that not everyone would be granted access to this, therefore excluding people who do not live in privileged areas of the world with access to resources that would support this high life expectancy. This is further demonstrated in the following: “As people live longer, they will get more age-related diseases. But thankfully, medicine will also advance by 2050.” Similarly, the use of the general “people” and the high certainty of the sentence seems to not

consider the unequal distribution of resources around the world. To align with the principles of EE, the teacher could call attention to this, and together with the students, it would be possible to look for areas of life that are not considered in this text and find alternative ways of covering them.

In the next section about renewable energy sources, the auxiliary verb “may” in “Solar power may become the world’s biggest energy source” expresses some uncertainty about the statement. However, the following sentences are presented as being highly factual: “By 2050, solar power will produce as much as 27 per cent of the world energy. It will become the world’s largest source of electricity, according to recent research from the International Energy Agency.”. The use of “will produce” and “will become”, as well a reference to a scientific source, help to imply that this is something that the students ought to consider as a fact. However, these assertions fail to consider the other, potentially polluting energy sources that will make up the remaining sources of energy, which may create the impression that technology can resolve environmental challenges entirely. The role of technology in finding solutions to environmental issues could further be explored by the teacher in discussions about renewable energy sources, thus aligning with the principle of EE of being critical about the solutions offered to reduce environmental degradation.

In the next sections of the text, the depletion of available resources for the survival and well-being of humans as a result of climate change are considered. The relationship between the sentences “The world’s growing population will need more food and water in order to survive.” and “Some important consequences of climate change, such as increased flooding and drought, have already begun to appear” provides some insight into what “climate change” means in this text, as it seems to refer to the need for food and water and thus also the growing population. The growing populations of the earth and the overconsumption of resources are one of the sources for climate change, but this is not entirely apparent in these two sentences, as no causal relationship

between the reasons and the result are made. Instead, the impression is given that climate change is connected to the growing population because it affects the population's needs for food and water by causing floods and drought. The role of the growing population as one of the sources of climate change is backgrounded. Although the increased needs of the growing population entail challenges in providing resources to survive, the following section implies that the solution for consequences of climate change is increasing production:

In order to feed a population of 9.6 billion, the world will need to increase its food production by an average of 60 per cent compared to how much we produce today. Not doing so would risk there being a serious lack of food, which could bring about major social conflicts and civil wars.

The serious implications of food shortage are mentioned in the section but the implications that increased food production will have and currently has on the environment and how this can contribute to climate change are “erased”. Similarly, in the sentences “In theory, there is plenty of land to grow enough crops. But one problem is that a lot of potential farmland is covered by forest or is on sensitive land, like wetlands, where farming would seriously harm the environment.”, forests are referred to with the word “problem” because they cover potential farmland, thus standing in the way of human well-being. The noun phrase “sensitive land” is used to describe wetlands; however, forests are not included in the sensitive land and are instead described as “potential farmland”. Thus, nature here is referred to as a problem and a resource, contributing to the ideology of nature as a resource, and producing more to fight climate change.

This text navigates the multifaceted problem of the growing population in the midst of a climate crisis but does not mention the simultaneous degradation of the ecosystem. Only human well-being is considered in the future of the world and, besides forests and wetlands that are portrayed as problems, no other organisms are mentioned. Environmental considerations are erased, thus, making this text an example of destructive discourse on the environment that does not align with the principles of EE.

2.3.3 Ambivalent discourses

As expected, the number of examples is the largest for ambivalent discourses. One of the ambivalent ways of portraying environmental issues in ILE textbooks is addressing the direct reasons for environmental degradation by listing the physical objects but ignoring the human responsibility and the underlying processes behind them. For example, in the text “10 interesting things about air (ILE 7, 2018: 17) car exhaust and power plants are listed as the physical causes of air pollution: “But air can also carry soot, smoke, and other particles from car exhaust and power plants. These are major contributors to air pollution.” The active participants in this sentence are “air” and “car exhaust and power plants” that are presented as major contributors to pollution, with the word “major” stressing the severity of the impact these factors have. The word “contributors” entails that there are also other factors, but they are not mentioned in this text. In the following section of the same text, the causers of poor air quality are “things” like “forest fires” and “cities”: “Things that cause poor air quality are forest fires and cities with lots of vehicle traffic”. In the exercise following the text (ILE 7, 2018: 19) where students are instructed to answer the questions about the text, this ideology is reproduced, with the questions “What contributes to air pollution?”, “What are the primary sources of CO₂?”, “What causes poor air quality?” that imply that the poor air quality is caused by inanimate objects. Although the interrogative word “what” can also refer to processes, the responsibility of human action could be made clearer with the use of words like “Who”, “How” or “Which actions.” Although it is inherently positive that these important factors contributing to air pollution are mentioned, the impact of the environmentally destructive behavior causing them is not addressed, thus contributing to the ideology of shallow environmentalism where the responsibility is shifted towards inanimate objects (Stibbe 2004).

In addition to listing immediate and physical causes of environmental issues, active responsibility can also be omitted by the use of the passive form. In the text “Bringing the lynx back to Britain” (ILE 7, 2018: 107), about reintroducing the Eurasian lynx to the UK, the reason for the extinction of the species are given as follows: “Even though it is one of the widest-ranging species of lynx, this wild cat hasn't lived in the UK since it was hunted to extinction 1,300 years ago.”. In the passive construction “was hunted”, the human agent is omitted, excluding humans from the active role in hunting. Similarly, in the text “Beavers boost wetlands (ILE 7, 2018: 109): “By the 16th century, beavers had been hunted to extinction in Britain, mainly for their fur.”, the hunters have a passive role with the construction “had been hunted” and beavers are in the role of the affected by a direct human activity through which animals are exploited. Although it is generally known that people have hunted the animals, passive construction is used. At the same time, it has to be considered that the use of passive constructions can be purposefully used by the authors to teach students about the passive voice. If this is the case, the teacher could think of alternatives to the common practice of using passive voice to teach environmental topics.

In some cases, the human involvement and the specific actions behind environmental degradation are recognized in combination with the passive construction, for example, in the text “10 interesting things about air” (ILE 7, 2018: 17): “However, large amounts of CO₂ are produced when cars and power plants burn coal, oil, and gasoline. This is bad because CO₂ is the most important contributor to human-caused global warming.” Although the actions of humans are listed as the cause for global warming, the passive “produced” is used, and it is “cars”, “power plants”, and “CO₂” that are presented as active participants in this sentences while human beings who drive cars and operate the power plants remain in the passive role. The term “global warming” is used instead of the term “climate change” which encompasses a bigger effect on the world’s

climate than just the rising of temperatures. Alexander & Stibbe (2014) claim that the term “global warming” has been sidelined in popular discourse because of its more threatening sound. The textbook studied still uses the older term, but it is not clear whether this is done consciously.

A similar combination of displaying human agency in combination with a passive construction is seen in the text “Beavers boost wetlands (ILE 7, 2018: 109): “Sadly, since 1900, around half of Earth's wetlands have been lost, mainly because of human activity, such as changing the land for farming”. The negative impact of agriculture on wildlife, and the consequences of human activity are addressed in combination with the passive construction “have been lost”. Although the phrases “have been lost and” “human activity” are generally considered ambiguous, because of the use of passive voice, and the general vagueness of “human activity”, an example of these activities are given. However, the word “changing” in “changing the land for farming” gives the impression that this is a process that is easily reversible.

Ambivalent discourses that include environmentally beneficial ideologies but also language patterns that evaluate animals for their skills, thereby objectifying them, occur in the text “Beavers boost wetlands” (ILE 7, 2018: 109): “Beavers are among the largest rodents in the world, and they are renowned for their skill at building dams.” The use of the words “renowned” and “skills” can be interpreted as a way of praising the animal to illustrate its worth or as a way of highlighting this identifiable characteristic of beavers. The benefit of dam building for both humans and nature is considered in the sentence “Following a 12-year study in Scotland, it has been confirmed that beavers' construction abilities have helped to restore wetland areas.”. On the one hand, this shows that beavers are valued for their skills of construction and usefulness for humans; on the other hand, it encompasses appreciation for beavers and their activities. However, the underlying need for restoring wetlands is based on the human actions of converting them for

agricultural use, which positions beavers as devices to undo environmental harm. Although beavers are a natural part of the ecosystem, the control that human beings impose on animals is emphasized in the following sentence: “Professor Nigel Willby, who worked on the study, says that beavers “are now being considered as tools for restoring wetlands, based on the benefits they can bring to the environment.” The use of the word “tool” when referring to beavers objectifies the animal and reduces its worth on the ability to be useful and “the benefits” they can bring. Although the benefit for both humans and the environment is a part of the ideology of appreciation for nature, beavers are considered as a resource for improving the ecosystem, thus at the same time contributing to the ideology of nature being a resource and a tool.

In the following section, beavers are described as “tree-gnawing mammals”, characterized by their actions that have a negative effect for the farmers:

However, some farmers are worried that beavers could cause more harm than good. They fear that their crops will be raided and that the tree-gnawing mammals could damage banks that have been created to protect fields from flooding.

A conflict of interest between farmers and nature as the beaver is described as a potential damage to the banks that have been “created” by humans to protect the fields from flooding, sparking a discussion on the ways of sustaining agriculture and life in rural areas, while minimizing the damage done to the ecosystem. Similarly, in the text “Bringing the lynx back to Britain” (ILE 7, 2018: 107), the reasons for reintroducing the lynx are both environmental and economic.

The UK has a large roe deer population, and this has led to some forest areas being overgrazed – which is when so many plants are eaten by animals that it damages the environment. Lynx could help to reduce the problem by keeping the deer population under control. O'Donoghue believes that lynx could also generate "tens of millions of pounds" for the area, bringing in tourists who want to spot them.

Although they are a symbiotic part of the environment, “animals” are assigned responsibility for damaging the environment, when in fact, the underlying cause is the human caused degradation of biodiversity. Lynx is described as a tool for “helping to reduce the problem”,

which objectifies the animal but also hides the fact that lynx will be killing “excessive” deer under a euphemistic expression. In addition, the introduction of lynx is pictured as an economic transaction, as it “could generate tens of millions of pounds for the area” by boosting tourism. Here, the lynx is an object for gazing by “tourists who want to spot them”. Thus, nature is framed as a means of earning a profit.

Ambivalent discourses are also evident in texts that have an environmental goal but generally express anthropocentric ideologies. For example, this chant about the environment has a clear goal of encouraging the students to reflect on their attitudes that can change how future generations live (ILE 6, 2017: 56):

Let’s think about the past – the people and places. The wisdom left for us to follow parents’ traces. Let’s think about the time – the people and the places. The future generations – what risks will they be facing? What footprints shall we leave on people and on places? Are we worth respect and will we leave good traces?

The chant deals with the topic of environmental issues as the words “footprints”, “future generations”, “traces”, commonly belonging to the discourse of climate change, appear. As the chant is meant for reading by the students, the pronoun “us” can potentially convey the ideas as the students’ own. The “people and the places” are in the role of the affected, thought about and impacted by the footprints of the students but no reference is made to other organisms. Thus, text has an environmental goal but is ambivalent because of its underlying anthropocentricity.

Additionally, ambivalent discourses in the textbooks appear in exercises that potentially inspire the connection to nature but at the same time encourage the aesthetic or practical valuation of the environment as a resource. An example of this can be found in ILE 5 (2016: 85), in the questions “Are there any nature trails in your local area? When did you last go on a nature walk?”, which can inspire students to reflect on how close they live to nature, how often they spend time in nature and what they do while in nature. The question “Are there many natural beauty spots near your town/village?” emphasizes the aesthetic value of nature, with the phrase “natural beauty”

contributing to the idea that nature is only worthy when it is considered beautiful by human standards. The negative effects of tourism are recognized in the following question (ILE 5, 2016: 85): “Have you seen any unpleasant effects of tourism on these places (people dropping litter, carving names, playing loud music)?” “Unpleasant” is a word that is often used to refer to something that humans find unattractive or negative, indicating that the effects of tourism are negative for humans, but their potential environmental harm is not mentioned. In addition, the actions listed in the brackets are not the effects of tourism but rather the actions that lead to unpleasant effects. Therefore, the possible negative effects that tourism can have, e.g. the degradation of natural habitats, loss of biodiversity, overuse of resources and pollution, are not represented. Although the questions “Some people say mass tourism can ruin natural beauty spots. Why do you think they say this? Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?” recognize that mass tourism has some negative effects on nature, the word “beauty” implies that it is the aesthetic degradation that is of concern. Thus, the potential impact of tourism on the ecosystems around us is something that needs to be further discussed by the teacher. In addition, further instruction by the teacher is needed to guide the students to reflect on the possible effects their own actions can have on their surrounding environment, and to offer solutions for more sustainable ways of being in nature.

The question (ILE 5, 2016: 85) “In many places, it’s tourism that keeps alive local traditions and crafts. Do you think local people have the right to enjoy the economic benefits from tourism?” might have the goal of encouraging sustainable thinking and discussion of the various sides of tourism and its implications for local communities, but is worded misleadingly, as it implies that it is the local people who have the power to impact the effects of tourism in their areas and are wrong for reaping its economic benefits. People in these areas are directly affected by any

environmental issues that might derive from the degradation of the ecosystems because of mass tourism. Stibbe (2004) criticizes the ideology according to which local people are to blame for the effects of ecological destruction, as it can move the focus away from the bigger stakeholders in the questions of mass tourism. However, it does raise a question about the role of local communities in conserving the ecosystems while still being able to support themselves financially.

A task that might inspire the students to appreciate the natural beauty of their home region and support the ideology of appreciation for nature without any economic implications can be found in ILE 5 (2016: 88) where the students are instructed to make a poster about “a natural beauty spot around you home town/village”. The potential problematic interpretation of the noun phrase “natural beauty spot” has already been discussed above. However, this might also have some environmental consequences, as the beauty of nature can also emphasize the potential of tourism in these areas which can have some negative effects on nature. This might play into the ideology that nature conservation is a commercial transaction or nature is a resource. This task could be, however, supported by a follow-up activity where students make posters or signs that encourage behavior in nature that conserves nature and/or propose sustainable ways of being in nature. Therefore, instead of only focusing on the aesthetic aspects of a nature spot, students could reflect on the kinds of consequences that tourism has had, might have in the future, and offer practical solutions for sustaining ecosystems in these places.

2.3.3.1 Solutions to counter climate change

In several texts in the textbooks, various solutions for addressing climate change or its effects are offered. For example, in the text “Life in 2050” (ILE 5, 2016: 111), the main topic is the future of the world but because the text mainly discusses resource depletion due to

overpopulation, climate change can be seen as the underlying topic of the text. Here, the key to solving the problem of food shortage lies in technological solutions and vocabulary belonging to the field of technology is used: “vertical farming”, “solar power”, “produce”, framing the issue of climate change as a technological problem. The solution to a better future and the well-being of humankind is implied to lie in the development of new technologies. Liu (2005) criticizes the portrayal of technological development as the solution to environmental pollution because it often fails to include the responsibility of people who have to take practical actions to reduce consumption and pollution. This idea is further emphasized in the speaking exercise that follows the text where the students are instructed to ask and answer questions (ILE 5 2016: 114). Some examples of the questions include: “Do you believe faster-than-light travel is possible?”, “What new kinds of energy might be used in the next 100 years?”, “Would you want to live on another planet?” and “Should the world solve all of its problems before humans move into space?”. These questions promote the idea that technological inventions will solve the issues the world might have in the future but do not encourage the students to reflect on how their own behavior might affect the future. However, the exercise includes a few open-ended questions that encourage students to discuss the possible problems they and the generations after them might have in the future: “Do you think life will be more difficult or easier for your grandchildren? In what ways?”, “How do you think Estonia will change in the future?”. With some guidance from the teacher, these questions have the potential to encourage the students to reflect on how their own actions can potentially shape their future.

In the text “Beavers boost wetland” (ILE 7, 2018: 109), the consequences of climate change are portrayed as reversible. This aligns with the framing “Climate change as a problem that can be fixed”, which according to Stibbe (2021: 45) is widespread. The frame is characterized by a

problem and a solution. For example: “Sadly, since 1900, around half of Earth's wetlands have been lost, mainly because of human activity, such as changing the land for farming (...) beavers “are now being considered as tools for restoring wetlands.” Here, the problem is the degradation and loss of wetlands, to which beavers are offered as a solution. Although some consequences of climate change can be prevented or even reversed, Hulme (2009: 326) claims that because climate change as a whole is not something that can be solved, it should not be depicted as such.

2.3.3.2 Non-human animal characters with human characteristics

Portraying non-human animal characters by applying human characteristics to them is thought to potentially strengthen the connection with nature by creating empathy and implying that non-human animals and human beings have similar traits. These anthropomorphic depictions of non-humans can potentially influence how humans perceive the agency of other organisms around us. (Kautz 2024)

In *I Love English 5* (2016), several fictional stories are presented, told from the point of view of non-human animal characters. In these stories, the animals are all given human-like characteristics, and they engage in activities that are often considered characteristic to people. Examples of this can be seen in the texts “Advice from a caterpillar” (ILE 5, 2016: 23) and “How the camel got his hump” (ILE 5, 2016: 39). In the text “How the camel got his hump” (ILE 5, 2016: 39), the characters are animals who are adjusting to the world and are just beginning to “work for the Man” – that is, animals are being domesticated. Although it is a children’s story which aims to teach about the consequences of being lazy, an ecolinguistics analysis might focus on the fact that here the power of human over animals is especially evident in the narration of the story.

Another children's story used in the textbooks is "The cyclone" by L. Frank Baum (ILE 5, 2016: 46, 47). Barnes and Weber (2005) have published an eco-critical reading of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* from which the text is taken. They have emphasized how the natural environment is constantly placed in the center of the story and natural phenomena seem to have damaging effects on the characters of the story:

When Aunt Em came there to live, she was a young, pretty wife. The sun and wind had changed her, too. They had taken the sparkle from her eyes and left them a sober gray; they had taken the red from her cheeks and lips, and they were gray also. She was thin and gaunt, and never smiled now.

The same applies to Uncle Henry, who is dependent on the cycle of the sun and the soil, as well as the agricultural development of the land (Barnes and Weber 2005). Barnes and Weber (2005) note how in this story, the health of the people reflects the state of the land. Thus, an ecological, rather than human centered attitude is established.

Uncle Henry never laughed. He worked hard from morning till night and did not know what joy was. He was gray also, from his long beard to his rough boots, and he looked stern and solemn, and rarely spoke.

Barnes and Weber (2005) discuss the following sentence: "There's a cyclone coming, Em", he called to his wife. "I'll go look after the stock", Then he ran toward the sheds where the cows and horses were kept." The reader is left wondering if Uncle Henry runs to the barns to save the cows because they are animals in need of help or because of the potential profit they represent.

Although the application of human characteristics to non-human animals has been criticized for being inherently anthropocentric, Kautz (2024) argues that it can potentially allow humans to understand and empathize with animals, which aligns with the principles of EE.

2.4 Discussion of results

In all three textbooks, examples of beneficial, destructive and ambivalent discourses were found. Beneficial discourses in ILE textbooks are characterized by linguistic devices like pronoun

use that signals human connection to the natural environment and vocabulary choices that emphasize the similarities between humans and non-human organisms, thus creating the ideology of humans being an interconnected part of the natural environment. The ideology of nature as a conscious being is created by assigning agency to animals and other non-human organisms, like plants, flowers and microorganisms, as well as using the name of specific species when referring to animals. This can create empathy towards nature and possibly encourage environmentally beneficial attitudes by encouraging students to reflect on their own actions when it comes to protecting the ecosystem. The role of the individual student is directly addressed by pronoun use, as well as by various questions that lead the students to reflect on their own role in contributing to pollution and create an opportunity to propose solutions to topical environmental problems around them. This supports the ideology that the individual's role in tackling climate issues and proposing solutions to address the consequences of the environmental problems is significant.

The beneficial ways of talking about the environment can be encouraged by the teacher through reproducing them and encouraging the students to do the same. The examples of beneficial discourses found in the textbooks align with 4 out of the 6 objectives for environmental education, as they promote awareness, understanding and concern for the environment, and also address the role of humans and the skills in dealing with and talking about environmental issues. The objective of critically evaluating the proposed solutions could be encouraged by the teacher outside the scope of the exercises in the textbooks. This can be done by creating debates or role plays and utilizing the principles of critical language awareness to create and assess texts about the environment. The last objective – participation – is something that can be encouraged by the teacher but considering the limitations of an English lesson, might not necessarily be feasible.

In the textbooks, destructive discourses convey ideologies that represent animals as objects and nature as a resource. The ideologies are characterized by language choices where non-human natural organisms are in the passive participant role, are framed as objects by certain vocabulary choices or are erased from the texts. Erasure of certain groups of people contributes to the idea of unequal distribution of resources around the world and the erasure of non-human organisms and the environment contributes to the ideology of anthropocentrism, as only the human benefit is considered when describing ecological damage. The ideologies of increased production and technology as a solution for climate change are created by certain vocabulary choices in the materials. These destructive ideologies do not align with the objectives of environmental education and thus should not be reproduced in lessons, which makes it important that the topics that are erased be taken up by the teacher. Thus, the teacher must have the knowledge and skills to notice these destructive devices and to find ways to reframe the topics and texts. Another way of dealing with destructive discourses and the specific destructive language devices could be to approach the text critically with the students and to look for the language devices as an objective for the language lesson. Then, alternative ways of talking about the environment could be proposed and the destructive language choices could be replaced by beneficial ones. For example, in the text “Life in 2050”, the students could be, after identifying the environmental topics that have been erased, instructed to add to the story in an environmentally beneficial way. This would be feasible considering the limitations of the English lesson, the topic of the unit, as well as the objectives of developing the students’ vocabulary skills, and would align with the principles of EE and the Estonian National Curriculum.

Ambivalent discourses in the ILE textbooks include ideologies that were found both in beneficial and destructive discourses. For example, linguistic devices that promote the ideology of

nature being a resource and appreciation for nature occurred simultaneously, especially in materials that included the topic of conservation, where nature is appreciated for its beauty and usefulness for the environment, but at the same time, is seen as a means of earning a profit or as a tool for human benefit. This reflects the current challenges in finding a balance between preserving the diversity of the ecosystem while establishing possibilities for humans to connect with nature in meaningful ways. This dilemma is also evident in the materials that include the topic of tourism, where the ideologies of appreciation for the beauty of nature and natural conservation as a commercial transaction often meet. In materials where concerns for the well-being of environment were considered from an economic or a human-centered perspective, the ideology of anthropocentrism occurred. In addition, the texts that depicted animals having human characteristics created anthropomorphic ideologies, which can potentially influence the human perception of non-human organisms but has been characterized as being inherently anthropocentric. The ideology of shallow environmentalism was created by listing the physical reasons for environmental degradation, while ignoring the impact of the environmentally destructive behavior behind them. The importance of human behavior was further omitted by the use of the passive form, while in some cases, the passive constructions and the human involvement in environmentally destructive practices appeared simultaneously.

The aspects of ambivalent discourses that are destructive should be addressed in the lesson by providing alternative ways of speaking about the environment. When it comes to addressing the destructive and ambivalent discourses, the role of the teacher is paramount in both directing the students' attention to the specific language forms and facilitating discussions and activities to find alternative ways of expressing these ideas. On the other hand, the time limits and restrictions of the lesson should be considered when making such recommendations, as both time and

economic resources of schools are limited. Additionally, all of the recommendations are made keeping in mind the varying language proficiencies of the learners. In order to direct the students towards a more critical way of analyzing information, the teachers themselves need to have the necessary skills to enhance the students' critical thinking and critical language awareness. Making sure that the teaching materials provided by the school already include beneficial discourses would lessen the teacher's workload, as the teacher would not have to come up with additional questions or activities.

Many of the exercises and tasks included in the analysis above express inherently beneficial or ambivalent ideologies. Tasks where students are instructed to create posters or presentations about environmental problems around their home areas or reflect on their personal role in contributing to environmental issues, as well as proposing solutions to problems that the consequences of climate change exhibit, are great examples of applying the objectives of EE and the cross-curricular topic "Environment and sustainable development" in the context of ELT. Additionally, activities that encourage students to imagine themselves as other organisms have the potential to create empathy towards and understanding of those organisms and possibly have a positive impact on the students' attitudes and actions towards the environment.

CONCLUSION

The main principles for including environmental topics in ELT derive from the concept of environmental education. In Estonia, environmental topics are included in the cross-curricular topic “Environmental and sustainable development” and appear as one of the guidelines of in Estonia’s education strategy for 2021-2025. Studying environmental topics and highlighting the language choices made in portraying them can be useful in developing the students’ critical language awareness and critical thinking skills. The portrayal of the environment in various genres can be studied with an ecolinguistics analysis of language features that convey certain ideologies and create beneficial, destructive and ambivalent discourses.

The aim of this thesis was to critically analyze the *I Love English* textbooks 5-7 to find out what kind of ideologies about the environment are embedded in the linguistic features of the texts and to what extent they create destructive, ambivalent and beneficial discourses about the environment. This was done by first determining the number of materials that include nature or environmental topics. Then, the materials that included sufficient material for analysis were analyzed and the ideologies in them identified. Based on these language features and ideologies, the distinction between destructive, beneficial and ambivalent discourses was made.

The results of the analysis show that although the textbooks contain both destructive and beneficial discourses, most of the discourses are ambivalent, meaning that the teacher’s role in addressing the topics is of great importance. The beneficial discourses are characterized by ideologies such as humans being an integral part of the natural environment, nature as a conscious being and the significant role of the individual in addressing environmental issues. The destructive discourses include ideologies such as the objectification of animals, nature as a resource, erasure of the environment, anthropocentrism, technology and increased production as a solution to

climate change. In ambivalent discourses, the ideologies of shallow environmentalism, nature as an instrument for human wellbeing, nature as a resource and a tool, appreciation for nature and its beauty, technological solutions to climate change and consequences of climate change as reversible, as well as anthropocentric and anthropomorphic ideologies appeared. The analysis revealed that many of the exercises in the textbooks convey beneficial discourses and align with the principles of EE, as well as the aims of the cross-curricular topic “Environment and sustainable development.” The ways in which the teacher can address the destructive discourses and contribute to ambivalent discourses in the textbooks by facilitating discussions and further developing the already existing exercises were discussed.

Several problems arose regarding the specific method for analysis. Stibbe (2021) in his analysis focuses on news discourse and on economics textbooks which are intended for use in higher education. Thus, the method does not take into account the varying language level of texts and might not be the most appropriate for analyzing textbooks with a lower language level. The textbooks include many texts extracted from children’s stories that require another, literature focused method for analyzing them. In addition, Stibbe does not take into account that certain language choices are made in textbooks for the purpose of teaching specific language related topics, such as the passive voice. Similarly, in textbooks for lower language levels, certain language forms can be purposefully avoided. However, the method makes it possible to, in the framework of critical language awareness, draw attention to various ways of speaking that we are used to and to discuss their potential implication, regardless of the intentions of the authors.

Stibbe (2021) does not present an in-depth ecolinguistics analysis of any complete text; instead, the topics are illustrated with general examples from various genres, which makes this method difficult to apply systematically for analysis. In addition, some of Stibbe’s interpretations

cannot be applied in the context of analyzing textbooks. For example, the use of general names for animals, instead of the names of specific species, is a characteristic of the genre of the textbook and thus cannot be considered as an objectifying tool. Additionally, the objective of dividing discourses into destructive, beneficial and ambivalent is questionable, as they often do not drastically differ from each other. Stibbe's method does not give clear instructions on the specific characteristics of each discourse which makes the analysis potentially subjective. In addition, the relationship between ideology and discourse, as used by Stibbe (2021) remains ambiguous, as ideology both makes up and consists of discourses.

These specific textbooks were chosen because they are produced in Estonia and align with the Estonian national curricula. Textbooks for middle school might not be the best material for this kind of analysis because there are not many language patterns to actually analyze. Thus, textbooks aimed at a higher language level would provide more interesting analysis material as the linguistic devices would be more diverse. Because of the restricted language use, only a few linguistic devices could be analyzed in this thesis.

In the future, similar research could be conducted on a larger number of textbooks targeting higher language levels. There, corpus methods could be combined with critical discourse analysis to get a better overview of how environmental topics are represented. In addition, a multimodal analysis of the textbooks would provide a more in-depth understanding of the portrayal of the environment. Future studies could also approach the topic with a focus on creating additional materials to assist the teacher in developing learners' critical language awareness through the cross-curricular topic "Environment and sustainable development," as well as piloting these materials in middle school settings to see what kinds of challenges arise.

This thesis has shown how the environment is portrayed in the *I Love English 5-7* textbooks and highlighted some ways in which the learners' critical language awareness and critical thinking skills can be developed in EFL lessons through the topics of environment and sustainability. In addition to including beneficial discourses, the textbooks also contain examples of destructive and ambivalent discourses. Therefore, the role of the teacher is essential in addressing these topics by ideally guiding the students to notice certain language choices and the possible meanings behind them. For this, the teacher needs to have the skills and the desire to dedicate limited classroom time to this aim. As a result, the students could develop skills in reflecting on the role of language in addressing societal and environmental issues, as well as their own participation in the protection of the ecosystem, while developing their skills and awareness in how language is used in order to portray and construct reality in a certain way.

REFERENCES

Primary sources

- Kurm, Ülle, and Mare Jõul. 2001. *I Love English 5: Student's book*. Tartu: Studium.
- Kurm, Ülle, and Mare Jõul. 2008. *I Love English 5: Student's book*. Tartu: Studium.
- Kurm, Ülle, and Ene Soolepp. 2016. *I Love English 5: Student's Book*. Tartu: Studium.
- Kurm, Ülle, and Mare Jõul. 2002. *I Love English 6: Student's book*. Tartu: Studium.
- Jõul Mare, and Ülle Kurm. 2009. *I Love English 6: Student's book*. Tartu: Studium.
- Kurm, Ülle, and Ene Soolepp. 2017. *I Love English 6: Student's Book*. Tartu: Studium.
- Jõul Mare, and Ülle Kurm. 2003. *I Love English 7: Student's book*. Tartu: Studium.
- Kurm, Ülle, Ene Soolepp and Nickolas Fyfe. 2010. *I Love English 7: Student's book*. Tartu: Studim.
- Kurm, Ülle, and Ene Soolepp. 2018. *I Love English 7: Student's Book*. Tartu: Studium.

Secondary sources

- Ajagán-Lester, Luis., Per Ledin and Henrik Rahm. 2003. Intertextualiteter. In Englund, Boel and Per Ledin (eds). *Teoretiska Perspektiv på Sakprosa*, 203-237. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Alexander, Richard J. and Arran Stibbe. 2014. From the analysis of ecological discourse to the ecological analysis of discourse. *Language Sciences* 41:A, 104–110.
- Barnes, Mollie and Rebecca Weber. 2005. Lions and tigers and tears and environmental activists, oh my! An eco-critical reading of L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. *The Oswald Review: An International Journal of Undergraduate Research and Criticism in the Discipline of English*: 7:3.
- Bartlett, Tom. 2017. Positive discourse analysis. In Flowerdew, John and Richardson, John. E. (eds). *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Discourse Studies*, 133-147. London: Routledge.
- Bellewes, Emile. 2024. *Ecolinguistics and Environment in Education*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Blackmore, Elena and Tim Holmes (eds). 2013. *Common Cause for Nature: Values and Frames in Conservation*. Machynlleth, Wales: Public Interest Research Centre, available at <https://publicinterest.org.faircliughuk/download/Common-Cause-for-Nature-Full-Report.pdf>
- Breeze, Ruth. 2011. Critical discourse analysis and its critics. *Pragmatics* 21:4, 493–525.
- Cristovão, Vera Lúcia Lopes, Bruno Sanches, and Graham Smart. 2022. Environmental discourse in Brazilian English-as-a-foreign-language textbooks: socio-discursive practices and their implications for developing students' critical environmental literacy. *Environmental Education Research*, 28:1, 75–94.
- Crookes, Graham V. 2013. *Critical ELT in Action: Foundations, Promises, Praxis*. New York: Routledge.
- Deetjen, Claudia, Christian Ludwig. 2021. Going green in the EFL classroom: an introduction. *Ecozona*, 12:1, 1-7.
- Dijk, Teun Adrianus van (ed). 1997. *Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction*. Vol. 2, *Discourse as Social Interaction*. London: Sage.

- Fairclough, Norman and Ruth Wodak. 1997. Critical discourse analysis. In Teun van Dijk (ed). *Discourse as Social Interaction*, 258-284. London: Sage.
- Fairclough, Norman. 2010. *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Felicitas Macgilchrist 2018. Textbooks. In Flowerdew, John and Richardson, John. E. (eds). *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Discourse Studies*, 525-539. London: Routledge.
- Gavilan, Ingrid A., Sulis Triyono, George M. Jacobs, Sara Trett, Aditya A. Soeta Bangsa and Chenghao Zhu. 2024. An analysis of environmental education in Indonesian EFL elementary school textbooks. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 12:3, 3-16.
- Halliday, Michael A. K. 2001. New ways of meaning. The challenge to applied linguistics. In Fill, Alwin and Peter Mühlhäusler (eds). *The Ecolinguistics Reader: Language, Ecology and Environment*, 175–202. London: Continuum.
- Halliday, Michael A. K. and Jonathan J. Webster. 2003. *On Language and Linguistics*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.
- Halliday, Michael. A. K. and Christian M. I . M. Matthiessen. 2013. *Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Harwood, Nigel (ed). 2014. *English Language Teaching Textbooks: Content, Consumption, Production*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hulme, Mike. 2009. *Why We Disagree About Climate Change: Understanding Controversy, Inaction and Opportunity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jacobs, George M. 2017. Ecolinguistics and education. In Fill, Alwin F. and Hermine Penz (eds). *The Routledge Handbook of Ecolinguistics*, 378-392. Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Jacobs, George M. and Andrew Goatly. 2000. The treatment of ecological issues in ELT coursebooks. *ELT Journal*, 54:3, 256-264.
- Kautz, Alissa. 2024. Humanising the nonhuman: an ecocritical toolbox for anthropomorphic agency. *Ecozona*, 15:2, 173-188.
- Kirova, Snezana and Snezana Stavreva- Veselinovska. 2004. The presence of ecological topics in textbooks of English as a foreign language. *Natura Montenegrina*, 3, 253-256.
- Kuttner, Elisabeth. 2019. Using Young Adult Literature in Order to Promote Values of Sustainability in EFL Learners. Unpublished MA thesis, University of Graz.
- Littlejohn, Andrew. 2000. *Cambridge English Worldwide A-Z of Methodology*. Available at <https://www.cambridge.org/elt/ces/methodology/criticallanguage.htm>, accessed April 2025. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Liu, Yongbing. 2005. Discourse, cultural knowledge and ideology: a critical analysis of Chinese language textbooks. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 13:2, 233–264.
- Machin, David. 2013. What is multimodal critical discourse studies? *Critical Discourse Studies*, 10:4, 347–355.
- Mahlakõiv, Krista. 2014. *EFL Teachers' Attitudes Towards Teaching Cross-Curricular Topics*. Unpublished MA thesis. Department of English, University of Tartu, Tartu, Estonia.
- Mercer, Sarah, Nayr Correia Ibrahim, Katherine Bilsborough, Ceri Jones and Chiara Potzinger. 2023. Teacher perspectives on addressing environmental issues in ELT. *ELT Journal*, 77: 4, 393–406.
- Micalay-Hurtado, Marco A. and Robert Poole. 2022. Eco-critical language awareness for English language teaching (ELT): Promoting justice, wellbeing, and sustainability in the classroom. *Journal of World Languages*, 8:2, 371-390.

- Ministry of Climate. 2017. Climate Change Adaptation Development Plan until 2030. Available at <https://kliimaministeerium.ee/rohereform-kliima/kliimapoliitika/kliimamuutustega-kohanemine>, accessed March 2025.
- National curriculum for basic schools, Appendix 13: Descriptions of cross-curricular topics. Estonian Ministry of education and research. 2011. Available at https://www.hm.ee/en/national-curricula?view_instance=0¤t_page=1, accessed February 2025.
- National curriculum for basic schools, Appendix 2: Foreign languages. Estonian Ministry of education and research. 2011. Available at https://www.hm.ee/en/national-curricula?view_instance=0¤t_page=1, accessed February 2025.
- National curriculum for basic schools. Estonian Ministry of education and research. 2011. Available at https://www.hm.ee/en/national-curricula?view_instance=0¤t_page=1, accessed February 2025.
- Nikkanen, Jussi. 2024. An Ecolinguistic Discourse Analysis of the BBC's Nature Documentary Series Planet Earth and Planet Earth II. Master's Thesis. Department of English, University of Turku, Turku Finland. Available at <https://www.utupub.fi/handle/10024/177565>
- North American Association for Environmental Education. N.a. Available at <https://naaee.org/about/ee>, accessed March 2025.
- Pizmony-Levy, Oren. 2011. Bridging the global and local in understanding curricula scripts: the case of environmental education. *Comparative Education Review*, 55:4, 600–633.
- Poole, Robert. 2016. A corpus-aided ecological discourse analysis of the Rosemont Copper Mine debate of Arizona, USA. *Discourse & Communication* 10:6, 576–595.
- Reisigl, Martin and Ruth Wodak. 2016. The discourse-historical approach (DHA). In Wodak, Ruth and Michael Meyer (eds). *Methods of critical discourse studies*, 23-61. London: Sage.
- Smith, Christopher, Jaffer Sheyholislami. 2022. Current trends in critical discourse studies of textbooks: a look at selected literature. *Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 25:1, 47-63.
- Steffensen, Sune Vork. 2024. Surveying ecolinguistics. *Journal of World Languages*, October. Published online ahead of print. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1515/jwl-2024-0044>
- Stibbe, Arran. 2004. Environmental education across cultures: beyond the discourse of shallow environmentalism. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 4:4, 242-260.
- Stibbe, Arran. 2012. *Animals Erased: Discourse, Ecology, And Reconnection with the Natural World*. Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press.
- Stibbe, Arran. 2013. An ecolinguistic approach to critical discourse studies. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 11:1, 117–128.
- Stibbe, Arran. 2018. Critical discourse analysis and ecology. In Flowerdew, John and John E. Richardson (eds). *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Discourse Studies*, 497-509. London: Routledge.
- Stibbe, Arran. 2021. *Ecolinguistics: Language, Ecology and the Stories We Live By*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Stibbe, Arran. 2024. Taste the feeling: an ecolinguistic analysis of Coca-Cola advertising. *Journal Of World Languages*. 10:2, 280–303.
- The Estonian ministry of education and research. 2021. Education strategy 2021-35. The Estonian ministry of education and research. Available at <https://www.hm.ee/en/ministry/ministry/strategic-planning-2021-2035#documents>, accessed March 2025.

- The government of Estonia. 2017. Kliimapoliitika põhialused aastani 2050. Available at <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/307042017001>, accessed March 2025.
- Torkar, Gregor. 2014. Learning experiences that produce environmentally active and informed minds. *NJAS: Wageningen Journal of Life Sciences*, 69:1, 49–55.
- Tryono, Sulis., Wenin Sahayu, Margana, Margana, Sahnaz N. Fath. 2023. Ecological discourse and environmental education in English textbooks: a multimodal eco-critical discourse analysis. *3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature® The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 29: 3, 213-227.
- UNESCO- UNEP. 1975. The Belgrade Charter. Available at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000017772?posInSet=1&queryId=78cd7bb9-0144-4b25-8fd8-16ef722a1cd6>, accessed March 2025.
- UNESCO. 2022. Berlin Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development; Learn for our planet: Act for sustainability. Available at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381228>, accessed March 2025.
- van Leeuwen, Theo. 2008. *Discourse And Practice: New Tools for Critical Discourse Analysis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Vitta, Joseph. P. 2023. The functions and features of ELT textbooks and textbook analysis: a concise review. *RELC Journal*, 54:3, 856-863.
- vom Hau, Matthias. 2009. Unpacking the school: textbooks, teachers, and the construction of nationhood in Mexico, Argentina, and Peru. *Latin American Research Review*, 44: 3, 127–54.
- Winther Jørgensen, Marianne and Louise Phillips. 2002. *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*. London: Sage.
- World Meteorological Organization. 2020. Available at <https://wmo.int/about-us/world-meteorological-day/wmd-2020/climate-change-and-water>, accessed April 2025.
- Xiong, Tao. 2014. Shallow environmentalism: A preliminary eco-critical discourse analysis of secondary school English as a foreign language (EFL) text in China. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 45: 4, 232–242.

RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL

ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

Kristiina Kisler

An ecolinguistic analysis of *I Love English* textbooks 5-7

“I Love English 5-7” õpikute ökolingvistiline analüüs

Magistritöö

2025

Lehekülgede arv: 60

Annotatsioon:

Käesoleva magistritöö uurib keskkonna kujutamist “I Love English” 5-7 õpikutes õpilaste kriitilise keeleteadlikkuse arendamise kontekstis. Töö eesmärgiks on välja selgitada, milliseid ideoloogiaid kujundab õpikute keeleteadlikkus ja kuidas need ideoloogiaid moodustavad keskkonna suhtes kasulikke, kahjulikke ja ambivalentseid diskursuseid. Selleks analüüsiti õpiku tekstides, harjutustes ja tegevustes esinevat keeleteadlikkust ökolingvistiliste meetoditega.

Magistritöö esimeses peatükis antakse ülevaade keskkonnaharidusest üldiselt ning sellest, kuidas see on esindatud Eesti haridusvaldkonnas. Lisaks sellele tutvustatakse ökolingvistikat kui uurimissuunda ja andakse ülevaade varem läbi viidud ökolingvistilistest inglise keele õpikute analüüsist. Sellele järgneb empiiriline osa, milles viiakse läbi õpikute kvalitatiivne analüüs ning tuuakse näiteid igast esinevast ideoloogiast ja sellest, kuidas need moodustavad diskursuseid. Järgnevas diskussiooni osas võetakse kokku peamised tulemused ja arutatakse selle üle, kuidas need võimaldavad panustada õpilaste kriitilise keeleteadlikkuse arendamisse.

Õpikutes esineb nii kasulikke kui ka kahjulikke diskursuseid, kuid suur osa diskursustest on ambivalentseid, mis näitab õpetaja rolli olulisust neid moodustava keeleteadlikkusele tähelepanu pööramisel ja sellele alternatiivide leidmisel. Õpikud sisaldavad mitmeid ülesandeid, mis kujundavad kasulikke diskursuseid ja rõhutavad õpilase kui indiviidi rolli keskkonnakasulike otsuste vastu võtmisel ja nende üle reflekteerimisel. Magistritöö näitlikustab võimalusi läbi keskkonnateemade arendada õpilaste arusaama sellest, kuidas keeleteadlikkus loob tähendusi ja kasvatada nende teadlikkust omaenda keeleteadlikkusest.

Märksõnad: Väärkeele õpetamine, inglise keele õpetamine, keskkonnaharidus, ökolingvistika, diskursus

Lihtlitsents lõputöö reprodutseerimiseks ja lõputöö üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemiseks

Mina, Kristiina Kisler,

1. annan Tartu Ülikoolile tasuta loa (lihtlitsentsi) enda loodud teose

An ecolinguistic analysis of *I Love English* textbooks 5-7,

mille juhendaja on Raili Marling

1.1.reprodutseerimiseks säilitamise ja üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemise eesmärgil, sealhulgas digitaalarhiivi DSpace-is lisamise eesmärgil kuni autoriõiguse kehtivuse tähtaja lõppemiseni;

1.2.üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemiseks Tartu Ülikooli veebikeskkonna kaudu, sealhulgas digitaalarhiivi DSpace'i kaudu kuni autoriõiguse kehtivuse tähtaja lõppemiseni.

2. olen teadlik, et punktis 1 nimetatud õigused jäävad alles ka autorile.

3. kinnitan, et lihtlitsentsi andmisega ei rikuta teiste isikute intellektuaalomandi ega isikuandmete kaitse seadusest tulenevaid õigusi.

Kristiina Kisler

13.05.2025

Autorsuse kinnitus

Kinnitan, et olen koostanud käesoleva magistritöö ise ning toonud korrekselt välja teiste autorite panuse. Töö on koostatud lähtudes Tartu Ülikooli maailma keelte ja kultuuride instituudi anglistika osakonna oma õppekava magistritöö juhendist ning on kooskõlas heade akadeemiliste tavadega.

Kristiina Kisler

13.05.2025

Lõputöö on lubatud kaitsmisele.

Raili Marling

13.05.2025