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COMMUNICATING ECOLOGICAL VULNERABILITY: MULTIMODAL STRATEGIES IN GREENPEACE'S VIDEO NARRATIVES

TETIANA KRYSANOVA

Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University, Ukraine

Abstract. This study examines how Greenpeace's video narratives construct ecological vulnerability through the integration of verbal, nonverbal, and cinematic elements. Grounded in multimodal discourse analysis and environmental theory, the research positions Greenpeace's strategies as social communication tools that present ecological vulnerability as both urgent and relatable. Analysing a dataset of 82 Greenpeace videos, the study identifies recurring multimodal codes and categories integrated into cohesive strategies. Verbal elements highlight environmental threats, factual reasoning, vulnerable groups and ecosystems, fictional creatures, advocacy, sensory engagement, ethical principles, and calls to action. Nonverbal features, such as imagery of people, animals, plants, natural disasters, and industrial sites, visualize and intensify the representation of these issues, while cinematic techniques – including close-ups, music, and shot angles – enhance emotional engagement and immersion. The findings reveal two key strategies: Reasoning, which combines logical arguments with emotional appeal, and Fairy Storytelling, which uses imaginative elements to personalize environmental issues and evoke empathy. These strategies demonstrate how semiotic modes interact to create compelling narratives that foster awareness and inspire action. This research highlights the role of multimodal communication in addressing ecological challenges and provides a framework for analysing how video storytelling mobilizes public engagement.

Key words: code, category, ecological vulnerability, Greenpeace, multimodal strategy, video

INTRODUCTION

In an era of escalating environmental crises, global advocacy organizations such as Greenpeace have embraced diverse strategies to communicate ecological issues and inspire public action. Among these strategies, the narrative of ecological vulnerability highlights how seemingly minor environmental disruptions can trigger significant, often catastrophic consequences. This narrative is communicated through the integration of multimodal strategies, where verbal, nonverbal, and cinematic elements work together to create messages that resonate emotionally with audiences.

This article focuses on the multimodal construction of ecological vulnerability in Greenpeace's video campaigns, emphasizing how environmental issues are framed through a complex interplay of visual imagery, sound design, textual elements, and human behaviour. Specifically, it examines the ways how various multimodal resources are orchestrated to create persuasive environmental narratives. Drawing on theories of multimodality and ecological communication, the author investigates the interplay between the form of multimodal resources and the meaning they construct in these videos. Greenpeace's video narratives go beyond informing about environmental harm; they are strategically crafted to evoke empathy, instil a sense of urgency, and ignite moral responsibility, motivating viewers to engage in environmental activism. This research highlights how narratives make the abstract concept of ecological vulnerability more tangible, relatable, and urgent for the public.

This framework facilitates the analysis of the following research questions: (1) What verbal codes and categories are employed in Greenpeace's video narratives to construct ecological vulnerability? (2) How do nonverbal codes and categories contribute to the meaning-making of ecological vulnerability in these narratives? (3) In what ways do cinematic codes and categories shape the representation of ecological vulnerability? (4) How do verbal, nonverbal, and cinematic categories interact to form cohesive multimodal strategies in Greenpeace's video narratives?

Ecological vulnerability highlights the sensitivity of ecosystems to various stress factors, such as climate change, pollution, and habitat loss. These challenges can compromise biodiversity and disrupt essential ecological functions (Hou et al., 2022). The resilience of ecosystems – how well they recover from disturbances – is critical for maintaining their health and stability over time. This issue extends beyond ecosystems, as all communities, regardless of their reliance on natural resources, are impacted by ecological instability, which plays a vital role in ensuring access to food, water, and overall public health (Begon and Townsend, 2021). Addressing ecological vulnerability is essential for both environmental protection and community well-being.

Multimodality refers to the integration and interaction of various semiotic modes – such as text, images, gestures, and sounds – in meaning-making. Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) highlight that meaning emerges from the deliberate design and combination of modes within a communicative product, while Jewitt (2009) focuses on the interaction of modes in constructing shared understanding. Norris (2004) adds to this by emphasizing the dynamic and context-dependent relationships between modes, illustrating that meaning is actively shaped in both real-time communication and static representations. These theoretical insights guide the analysis by identifying how Greenpeace integrates multimodal resources to construct emotionally resonant and intellectually compelling narratives of ecological vulnerability.

Ecological communication theory, as articulated by Cronon (1995: 70) and Hajer (1995: 14), positions communication as the critical mechanism for addressing environmental challenges within complex societal systems. According to Luhmann (1989: 28-29), ecological communication bridges the gap between scientific knowledge, policy-making, and public awareness by framing environmental problems in socially comprehensible ways. This involves shaping narratives that resonate with the values, emotions, and identities of diverse audiences. Hansen and Cox (2015: 9) argue that language, rhetoric, and environmental discourse collectively shape how ecological issues are framed, delineating the boundaries of public understanding and opinion. Within this framework, Greenpeace's multimodal strategies operate as a form of social communication that translates ecological vulnerability into an urgent and relatable concept.

The concept of strategy in discourse involves the deliberate and systematic use of various forms of communication to achieve specific objectives, often situated within intricate power dynamics and social contexts (Fairclough, 1995: 35). Discourse strategies manifest in multiple ways, highlighting the essential role of multimodal communication in constructing meaning. The effectiveness of these strategies relies on their capacity to connect with audiences, appealing to both their feelings and critical thinking. Furthermore, strategic discourse motivates social changes by raising awareness of urgent matters, challenging dominant ideologies, and promoting collective action (van Leeuwen, 2008).

In the field of mediatized environmental communication, special attention has been given to the visualization of ecological concerns (Anderson, 2014). The growing influence of media in environmental politics shapes how we perceive ecological issues, often through spectacularized narratives. 'Spectacular environmentalisms' present solutions to ecological problems, blending political, normative, and moral dimensions within everyday media landscapes (Goodman et al., 2016: 678). Modern studies explore how iconic images, cartoons, and photographs help make complex phenomena like climate change more accessible to the public (Hansen and Machin, 2013). The term *eco-images* describes visual materials strategically employed in environmental campaigns, shaping contemporary environmental narratives and debates (Parak, 2013: 73).

Video as a communicative medium has transformed environmental discourse and constructed complex scientific phenomena on the screen. Greenpeace's videos play a critical role in highlighting the immediate and visible impacts of climate change, aiming to raise awareness and prompt action (Doyle, 2007: 134). Doyle (2007: 147) establishes video as a powerful 'discourse of truth and seeing' where the visual medium reinforces both scientific and moral imperatives. Empirical studies demonstrate the potential of ecological videos to influence public attitudes and behaviours. For example, Bousé (2000) argues that nature films, while presented as documentaries, are shaped by narrative conventions and media

competition, often reconstructing nature to align with human cultural values and societal ideals.

While previous studies of Greenpeace's communication strategies have explored their use of environmental rhetoric and media narratives, this study diverges by adopting a multimodal perspective to analyse the interplay of diverse semiotic resources. Building on these insights, this study extends the analysis by exploring how Greenpeace integrates multimodal resources to create a cohesive and emotionally engaging narrative of ecological vulnerability. By examining how Greenpeace integrates multimodal resources, this article reveals the organization's strategic use of multimodal techniques to transform ecological vulnerability from an abstract concept into an emotionally charged, socially resonant message.

METHOD AND MATERIALS

This research adopts a multidimensional approach, combining multimodal discourse analysis (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001; Machin and Mayr, 2023) and environmental communication principles to explore how meaning is constructed in Greenpeace's video narratives. This framework facilitates a detailed analysis of how semiotic modes interact to construct broader societal implications. The systematic use of coding ensures methodological rigor (Saldana, 2014). Through this approach, the study enhances our understanding of the role of multimodal storytelling in fostering environmental advocacy.

The dataset consists of 82 environmental videos (henceforth Vs) produced by Greenpeace, a globally recognized non-governmental organization dedicated to environmental protection. These videos were selected based on a systematic review of Greenpeace's publicly available content on official digital platforms, such as their YouTube channel and website. The inclusion criteria focused on thematic relevance, specifically addressing global environmental challenges like climate change, biodiversity conservation, and pollution – issues linked to ecological vulnerability as defined by McCarthy et al. (2001: 89). Ecological vulnerability refers to the susceptibility of natural or social systems to damage from climate change, influenced by their sensitivity to climatic changes, adaptive capacity to mitigate harm or seize opportunities, and exposure to climatic hazards (ibid.).

The selected videos, ranging from one to three minutes in length, integrate verbal, nonverbal, and cinematic semiotic resources to create coherent and impactful narratives. The analysis focuses on multimodal elements, examining their referential and communicative roles in shaping the concept of ecological vulnerability. Each multimodal component plays a unique role in meaning-making, which is a central focus of this research.

The verbal semiotic resource encompasses verbal language (both on- and off-screen) in the audial mode, as well as textual messages in the visual mode (such as posters and subtitles) that articulate the meaning of ecological vulnerability through lexical and pragmatic means. The nonverbal resource includes dynamic imagery of people, animals, plants, natural disasters, and industrial sites, which not only complements the verbal text but also possesses its own meaning-making potential. The cinematic semiotic resource involves the use of specific technical elements, such as shot size, angles, sound effects, and lighting, which significantly influence the meaning-making (Krysanova, 2024: 128).

The procedure encompasses several stages. The first stage involves collecting videos that emphasize ecological vulnerability, with a particular focus on the climate changes and systems sensitive to them. In the second stage, videos are transcribed using the methodology outlined by Baldry and Thibault (2006). Transcriptions include the verbal text, descriptions of accompanying visual elements, and cinematic features such as camera shots, camera angles, as well as lighting and sound effects. This process is manual, pairing each verbal segment with corresponding descriptions of visual and cinematic elements.

The next step is coding, where key codes – specific multimodal elements used to convey ecological vulnerability – are identified. These codes may include verbal expressions, visual components, and cinematic features. As Saldana (2014: 22) notes, codes serve as interpretive tools that capture the essence of language-based or visual data, bridging raw data with the extraction of meaning. After this, related codes are grouped into categories, which represent recurring themes or social and environmental issues. Once the categories are established, multimodal strategies are identified by examining how these categories combine and interact to construct ecological vulnerability. It helps to define the ways how these multimodal resources are recurrently deployed to create meaning.

This research employs an inductive approach, allowing themes to emerge organically from the data rather than relying on predefined categories. This ensures that the identified themes are deeply contextualized within the specific video narratives, offering a more nuanced understanding of ecological vulnerability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1 VERBAL CODES AND CATEGORIES

The analysis of Greenpeace's video narratives focuses on identifying verbal expressions – words and phrases explicitly or implicitly related to ecological vulnerability. They function as codes, representing specific elements of ecological vulnerability through language. By grouping related codes into broader categories, the analysis emphasizes how ecological and social issues are framed within the narratives. The categories uncovered in this analysis include Environmental

Threat, Factual Reasoning, Environmentally Vulnerable Groups and Spheres, Fictional Creatures, Environmental Advocacy, Sensory-Affective Engagement, Ethical Framework, and Action Imperative.

The Environmental Threat (ET) category focuses on the urgency of environmental crises and the complex, interconnected factors contributing to ecological degradation. This category includes the code Urgency and Gravity, which encompasses terms such as *damage, threat, danger, peril, risk, and challenge*, emphasizing the urgency of ongoing ecological issues. Additionally, it encompasses the code Systemic Causes: *pollution, climate change, plastic waste, consumerism, deforestation, oil industry, etc.,* underscoring the interconnected roots of environmental degradation. By combining these codes, the category links immediate dangers to their systemic causes.

The Factual Reasoning (FR) bolsters the narrative by incorporating measurable data, including the following codes: Statistical Data: *10% of emitters, $ 3,8 trillion, 71% of industrial global emissions since 1998* and Quantitative Data: *10,000 lives lost, a new laptop replaced after 3 years, etc.,* adding credibility to the argument. In V 1, the statement

> In reality, the fossil fuel industry produces a stadium full of oil every *3 hours and 37 minutes.* [V 1: 1.03]

uses quantitative data to underscore the scale of the environmental impact caused by the fossil fuel industry.

Other three categories centre on human and non-human actors affected by or involved in environmental action. The Environmentally Vulnerable Groups and Spheres (EVGS) expands the focus to the entities most at risk, including Humans: *people, children, communities, indigenous populations, local residents, future generations, refugees;* Wildlife: *animals, endangered species, wildlife habitats, insects, migratory species;* Plants and Ecosystems: *trees, forests, oceans, seas, wetlands, freshwater resources, ecosystems, soil*; Spheres: *Earth, health, economy, well-being, natural resources,* and *air quality*.

For example, V 2 identifies the oil industry as an agent of climate change, spotlighting its harmful actions: *drilling for oil*, which accelerates global warming and melts Arctic ice. The Arctic itself is presented as the environmentally vulnerable sphere:

> This summer, the oil industry is moving into the *Arctic*. They want to get their hands on the oil beneath the seabed at the top of the world so they can drill for the oil, which is warming our world and melting the ice. [V 2: 0.42-0.54]

Unique and imaginative elements are introduced through the Fictional Creatures (FC), which includes codes: Symbolic Figures: *monster, beast, creature, giant, etc.,* Anthropomorphic Animals: *turtle, rang-tan, octopus*, and Anthropomorphized

Objects: *spoon, plastic bottle, unfriend coal*. These codes represent imaginary or personified figures depicted in the videos, often functioning as metaphors for the overwhelming scale of environmental challenges. The use of these symbolic elements helps convey abstract environmental threats in a more vivid manner, making the complex issues more tangible.

The Environmental Advocacy (EA) is a category that encompasses both the individuals and organizations responsible for driving environmental change, as well as the actions proposed to address ecological challenges. This category includes the code Advocates: Humans (*eco-activists, scientists, Greenpeace supporters*) and Organizations (*businesses, governments, companies,* etc.) who advocate for environmental protection and solutions. One more code is Solutions, which highlights practical actions aimed to mitigate ecological harm including *conservation, eco-friendly consumption, renewable energy, biodiversity protection, waste reduction, treaty, and carbon neutrality*.

For example, in V 3, a prominent actress Amanda DuPont calls on governments to ratify the Global Ocean Treaty to protect oceans, highlighting the role of governmental action in safeguarding coastal communities. This advocacy is expressed through the statement:

> And governments must *ratify the Global Ocean Treaty*. [V 3:2.25]

Another category enriches the narratives by drawing on sensory and emotional dimensions. The Sensory-Affective Engagement (SAE) integrates both sensory experiences and emotional impact, using codes: Sensory Words: *see, hear, feel, and breathe* – helping the audience engage with environmental issues on a sensory level*;* Emotional Words: *sad, depressive, worried, alarmed, fear, happy, and enthusiastic* – convey the emotional responses triggered by environmental crises, enabling a deeper emotional connection; Descriptive Adjectives like *enormous, big, intense, great, awful, and crucial* which enhance the intensity of the narrative. These elements aim to immerse the audience in both a sensory and emotional understanding of environmental issues. For instance, in V 4, the threat of polluted air is vividly constructed through sensory references as in the opening line: 'The air I *breathe* has the *taste* of burning' [V 4: 0.01].

Moral and ethical dimensions are foregrounded in the Ethical Framework (EF), which incorporates the Value code, reflecting the core beliefs that guide individuals' actions in relation to what is considered environmentally good or bad: *solidarity, freedom, advocacy, justice, safety, respect, crime, and support*; and the Ideology code, related to political, social, or cultural perspectives: *revolution, green hands, environmentalism, sustainability, environment protection, etc.* These codes frame environmental challenges within a broader ideological perspective, urging viewers to align their actions with principles of fairness and responsibility.

The Action Imperative (AI) encapsulates the verbal expressions used to compel immediate and decisive actions in Greenpeace's video narratives. This integrates

the urgency conveyed through action with the direct prompts of calls to action. The key codes include Action Verbs *fight, combat, defend, protect, and unite*; Modal Verbs *must, need, should, and have to*, *want,* Calls to Action *act now, join us, stop this*, and Slogans '*Together for the planet'*.

For example, in V 5, the AI is realized through the modal verb and the call to action, conveying the moral imperative of environmental protection. Additionally, the phrase *energy revolution* foregrounds the ideological dimension of the environmental issue, representing the EF:

> I *want* an *energy revolution. Give Earth a hand.* [V 5: 1.14-1.24]

These categories and codes provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how Greenpeace constructs and communicates the concept of ecological vulnerability through language.

2 NONVERBAL CODES AND CATEGORIES

The nonverbal semiotic elements in Greenpeace's video narratives are pivotal in conveying the urgency of environmental issues. These elements can be systematically categorized reflecting recurring patterns of imagery commonly seen in environmental videos. This categorization not only emphasizes how visual rhetoric operates in environmental storytelling but also highlights the interplay between the visual content and the overarching message.

The analysis groups visual elements by their narrative and functional roles, emphasizing their individual contributions to the narrative.

The ET category integrates two visual codes: Natural Disasters and Catastrophes, and Industrial Facilities. This categorization, grounded in the report [UNDRR], emphasizes the connections between natural hazards, climate change, and environmental degradation. The Natural Disasters and Catastrophes code depicts severe events like hurricanes, floods, wildfires, and oil spills, focusing on the escalating threats. On the other hand, Industrial Facilities include visuals of factories and industrial sites, underscoring the role of industrialization in driving environmental degradation. These images illustrate the urgent consequences of inaction, portraying both natural and human-induced environmental threats.

For example, V 1 depicts industrial pipes emitting clouds of grey smoke, illustrating the environmental threat. This imagery is reinforced by the on-screen statement:

> Fossil fuel companies must stop their climate-wrecking crimes now. [V 1 :1.10]

The nonverbal elements also highlight both humans and non-humans affected by environmental action. The EVGS category captures visuals of living beings – humans, animals, and plants – facing existential threats. These include the People

code – images of people displaced by natural disasters or harmed by human-induced crises, the Animals code depicts animals suffering from environmental issues, and the Plants code, including visuals like burned trees or parched land. Such visual codes serve as powerful reminders of the interconnected vulnerability of ecosystems.

The EA includes two codes: People – influential individuals such as scientists, policymakers, and activists who bring attention to environmental crises, often through their expertise or leadership, and Actions, which focuses on the activism or mobilization efforts inspired by these individuals, including grassroots movements, political influence, or public demonstrations that align with environmental goals. For example, in V 6, Vankshita, a Greenpeace supporter, shares her vision for a green planet, set against the backdrop of Greenpeace activists' protests (0.13–0.17). This exemplifies the EA category by showcasing both People and their Actions. Later, the video transitions to a forest on fire (0.50) and a tiger in danger (1.08), which represents the EVGS.

The FC category uses creative visuals, such as Animated Characters, Anthropomorphic Animals, or Anthropomorphized Objects, to symbolize environmental themes. By incorporating fantasy and storytelling, these visuals simplify abstract concepts and enhance viewer retention.

For instance, in V 7, the animated story follows a turtle family travelling through an ocean increasingly threatened by climate change, plastic pollution, and overfishing. This narrative uses fictional creatures to convey urgent environmental issues, making them more accessible and impactful.

The Emotional Reactions (ER) category captures individuals expressing raw emotions through such codes as Facial Expressions, Gestures, and Vocal Tones, highlighting the emotional gravity of environmental issues. These non-verbal cues evoke empathy and foster a sense of solidarity by humanizing the narrative. This approach bridges the emotional gap between viewers and distant environmental crises.

3 CINEMATIC CODES AND CATEGORIES

Cinematic techniques are essential for forging emotional and sensory connections with audiences, functioning as codes in the process of meaning-making. Film theorists argue that different shot types – long shots, medium shots, and close-ups – serve distinct purposes in shaping audience perception. Long shots provide a broad perceptual scope, setting the context and immersing viewers in the environment. Medium shots focus on character actions, drawing attention to movement and interaction within the scene. Close-ups, which highlight emotional expressions or specific details, evoke a deeper emotional connection by emphasizing affective depth (Deleuze, 1989).

In videos, these shot types integrate to influence the narrative perspective. Long shots create a sense of scale and depict the environmental context, medium shots centre on the dynamics of action, while close-ups invite emotional engagement with characters or critical moments.

Camera angles further enhance meaning, acting as semiotic tools to deepen perception. By strategically employing angle shooting, filmmakers can provide events, character behaviour, or psychological states with heightened emotional and explanatory depth, enhancing their strength and expressiveness (Monaco, 2000: 96-97). For instance, a high-angle shot often conveys vulnerability, making characters appear small or weak. In contrast, a low-angle shot signals strength and authority, positioning characters as dominant or powerful. Bird's-eye views offer comprehensive perspectives, giving viewers an overarching understanding of the scene or environment, while point-of-view (POV) shots immerse the audience in the narrator's perspective, fostering a sense of presence within the story. The Dutch angle, with its tilted frame, disrupts visual stability and creates tension or unease, heightening dramatic effect.

Lighting shapes the mood, atmosphere, and emotional tone of a frame. Dim lighting and monochromatic schemes underscore threats, while bright lighting suggests solutions and positivity. Colour brightness and saturation are pivotal in conveying emotions, particularly amplifying negative affective responses (Monaco, 2000: 123).

Sound design, including music, voice-overs, and noises, is another powerful meaning-making tool. Sounds like natural disasters, insect hums, or machinery create an immersive auditory environment. Music enhances realism, ensures rhythmic continuity, and conveys narrative signals. Researchers note that music shapes mood, heightens expressiveness, and integrates with visuals through structural and associative coherence, amplifying emotional impact (Gorbman, 1987: 79).

Based on these codes, several key categories emerge in videos, encapsulating distinct aspects of video storytelling. The Emotional Engagement (EE) category evokes strong emotional reactions from the audience, incorporating codes: Close-up, High Angle, Dutch Angles, Music, and Lighting. The Sensory Engagement (SE) category focuses on creating a sensory connection with the audience, enhancing immersion in the narrative. This includes POV, Voice-Over (which directs attention to key moments and create narrative proximity), and Sound. The Action Dynamics (AD) is presented through Medium-up showcasing the activity and movements of characters. The Ecological Setting (ES) emphasizes the broader environmental context through codes of Wide Shot and Bird's-eye View.

In V 8, the central figure, a TV presenter, initially works in a brightly lit studio promoting modern aircraft flights. However, as she steps outside and dons a gas mask to protect herself from the polluted air, the lighting shifts dramatically

to darkness, interspersed with ominous red flashes symbolizing threat. This stark contrast in light and colour saturation highlights ecological vulnerability and critiques the illusion of 'green aviation', constructing environmental danger through the EE. Additionally, sharp alarm signals punctuate these events, heightening the environmental peril associated with aircraft use. These auditory cues constructed through the SE amplify the urgency of the issue and underscore the threat to human health and the environment.

In V 9, the AD is realized through the medium shot of people at protests (0.41), highlighting their actions and movements. The combination of high angles and music (0.43) constructs the EE, intensifying the emotional impact of the scene. The ES is depicted through a wide shot and a bird's-eye view (0.32), showcasing the environmental context. The POV shot (0.41) engages the audience by immersing them in the perspective of the rescue team.

4 MULTIMODAL STRATEGIES

The selected codes and their corresponding categories interact within the process of meaning-making. As a multisemiotic construct, video integrates elements from various semiotic systems to construct meaning. Therefore, analysing the categories involved in the representation of ecological vulnerability will help elucidate the strategies employed by the video makers to communicate the key theme. This section explores the multimodal strategies employed in Greenpeace's videos, focusing on how the integration of verbal, nonverbal, and cinematic categories creates distinct and systematic patterns. Two primary strategies – Reasoning and Fairy Storytelling – emerge as key approaches.

4.1 THE STRATEGY OF REASONING

The Strategy of Reasoning focuses on constructing logically coherent arguments that integrate multimodal elements to persuade the audience towards a specific perspective or encourage action. This strategy hinges on a logical progression, supported by evidence and enhanced by rhetorical devices, to increase its persuasive impact. In this research, 24 videos exemplify this strategy through the use of multiple codes.

In this strategy, the verbal and nonverbal categories primarily appeal to logical reasoning and moral considerations. Specifically, the ET, articulated verbally and visually, serves as the foundational premise by emphasizing the urgency of the ecological issue. This threat is connected to the EVGS, which links the issue to specific communities or areas at risk, lending credibility and specificity to the narrative. The EA and the EF provide moral authority, grounding the argument in ethical considerations and reinforcing its logical foundation. These categories enhance the argument by positioning the message within a moral context. The AI

bridges the gap between awareness and action, suggesting practical steps that logically follow from the argument, thus motivating the audience to act.

On the contrary, cinematic categories intensify the narrative's sensory-emotional impact. Empirical evidence indicates that cinematic elements from the EE, the SE, the AD, and the ES categories are systematically deployed to evoke emotional resonance, heighten sensory awareness, and reinforce the urgency of the argument.

For instance, in V 10, the manipulation of greenwashing by major oil companies is exposed, revealing how they mask ongoing environmental harm with exaggerated claims of sustainability. The opening sequence employs close-ups of concerned individuals, set against unsettling music, to establish the emotional atmosphere. This personalizes the abstract issue of greenwashing, anchoring it in human concern. The imagery of lush, thriving landscapes is deliberately juxtaposed with desolate areas dominated by oil rigs, illustrating the stark reality of the ET. This contrast underscores the discrepancy between corporate rhetoric and environmental reality, making the narrative's critique visually and emotionally impactful.

The voice-over explicitly introduces the ET:

> Big polluters *cover up their dirty business* by pretending to be green but their scams have *dangerous consequences*. French oil giant Total claims they're committed to a clean energy future, but they recently *bought rights permitting future oil drilling*. [V 10: 0.48-1.0]

This verbal framing is reinforced by the FR, as the video presents evidence of Total's greenwashing practices:

> Total claims they can compensate for the damage caused by their oil by *planting a 40,000 hectare tree farm* elsewhere in Congo, which they say can soak up *millions of tons* of their climate pollution. [V 10: 1.14-1.22]

This evidence is juxtaposed with its implications for the EVGS:

> This is *home to indigenous peoples* and a *vital wildlife refuge for lowland gorillas*. [V 10:1.37-1.40]

The video also refers to broader ethical concerns, highlighting the impact on communities and fragile ecosystems. The ET is further contextualized:

> Total's *oil addiction threatens* the world's largest tropical peatland, which stores an equivalent of 20 years of the USA's *fossil fuel emissions*. [V 10: 1.29-1.32)

The video concludes with the EF, showing natural disasters linked to industrial activities on screen and presenting a direct call to action:

> *We need REAL climate action NOW, not greenwashing scams*. [V 10: 2.09]

Cinematic categories of the EE and the SE are expressed through close-ups of concerned individuals, high-angle shots, alarming music, and the interplay of bright and dark lighting, accompanied by the voice-over. The AD is depicted through medium shots of individuals in action, and the ES is conveyed through wide shots and bird's-eye views of natural disasters and oil rigs.

Through the interaction of these multimodal categories, the video combines evidence-based claims with visual and cinematic cues to underscore the urgency of addressing ecological vulnerability.

4.2 THE STRATEGY OF FAIRY STORYTELLING

The strategy of Fairy Storytelling in environmental videos draws on elements of fairy tales, folklore, and anthropomorphism to convey ecological vulnerability. This approach manifests in animated forms, blending fictional elements with imaginative narratives to resonate both emotionally and intellectually. By attributing human characteristics to animals, plants, objects, or ecosystems, these stories create relatable characters that evoke empathy and foster a stronger emotional connection to the natural world. Within the analysed corpus, this strategy is identified in 12 videos.

For example, V 11 features a child who encounters a personified palm oil 'monster' in the kitchen, symbolizing the hidden consequences of everyday consumer choices, especially the use of unsustainable palm oil in food products. V 12 illustrates the journey of a plastic bottle from production to disposal, using anthropomorphism to give the bottle a character.

The strategy of Fairy Storytelling utilizes the nonverbal category of Fictional Creatures to anthropomorphize natural elements, as a primary category. These characters serve as the narrative's emotional core, bridging the gap between the viewer and environmental issues.

While verbal codes differ across videos, this strategy consistently incorporates the EF and the SAE to emphasize the urgency of ecological crises. The pairing of the ET with the EVGS situates these challenges as both immediate and personally relevant. The addition of the ER category deepens the resonance by illustrating the direct impact of environmental destruction on the anthropomorphized characters.

Nonverbal representations of the EA, often through animated figures, further the narrative's impact by visualizing action and advocacy. Cinematic codes, such as dynamic visuals, evocative music, and strategic framing, amplify the narrative's emotional and persuasive tone.

V 13 constructs a narrative of ecological vulnerability through the anthropomorphism of an orangutan that bridges emotional engagement and ethical awareness. By situating the orangutan in a human child's room – a bright, domestic space – the narrative establishes an initial sense of innocence and safety, which

is starkly contrasted with the dark, chaotic imagery of a rainforest under siege by excavators. This visual juxtaposition intensifies the emotional resonance of the ET, communicating the destructive consequences of palm oil production on wildlife habitats.

The ET is articulated both visually and verbally, encapsulating the fear of losing not only a home but also family and community. For instance, the line,

> There's *a human in my forest and I don't know what to do. He took away my mother and I'm scared he'll take me*, too. [V 13: 0.33-0.50],

illustrates the orangutan's plight in humanized terms, personalizing the broader ecological crisis and foregrounding the immediacy of action required. This personalization aligns with the EVGS category, making the issue urgent.

Cinematic elements further enhance this impact. Dutch angles of destroyed rainforest and close-ups of the scared animal convey disorientation and emotional vulnerability, while alarming music and diegetic sounds of machinery amplify the sensory immersion, making the destruction viscerally unsettling. These techniques are instrumental in deepening SAE, ensuring that the narrative not only informs but also profoundly moves the audience.

As the narrative evolves, the girl becomes a symbol of agency and hope, transitioning from a passive observer to an active advocate who vows to share Rangtan's story. This shift is crucial, as it models actionable responses to the environmental crisis. The closing poetic appeal,

> Oh Rang-tan in my bedroom, I swear it on the stars: *the future's* not yet written, but *I'll make sure it's ours*, [V 13: 1.15]

directly addresses the audience, reinforcing the video's call to action.

This blend of anthropomorphism, ethical framing, and emotions makes the narrative both appealing and action-oriented, urging viewers to confront environmental challenges on an emotional and personal level.

CONCLUSIONS

Employing multimodal discourse analysis, this study establishes a comprehensive framework to analyse the interplay of modes in ecological vulnerability narratives and their theoretical implications. The analysis reveals the intricate interplay of multimodal codes and categories that create strategies directed to shape audience engagement. These strategies illustrate how diverse modes collaboratively construct dimensions of ecological vulnerability. The meaning-making process in these videos follows a logical progression, transitioning from problem identification to solutions and audience mobilization through moral appeal and sensory-emotional engagement. The combination of verbal, nonverbal, and cinematic categories creates a narrative that is not only logically structured

but also emotionally compelling, engaging both the intellect and emotions of the viewer.

Verbal and nonverbal elements correspond to similar categories, suggesting that they intensify and clarify the same meaning by adding different nuances to the key theme. They unify logical reasoning, moral grounding, and sensory-emotional engagement. While the verbal and nonverbal elements work in tandem to enhance the argument, cinematic categories primarily address emotional impact, the dynamic development of the plot, and provide referential cues that further enrich the narrative.

The study distinguishes between two dominant strategies, specifying the unique combinations of multimodal categories associated with each. The strategy of Reasoning highlights the role of logical argumentation and evidence in reinforcing the urgency of ecological issues. By combining rational appeals with cinematic emotional resonance, these narratives engage viewers both intellectually and emotionally, fostering a sense of urgency and driving action. The strategy of Fairy Storytelling employs imaginative elements to humanize ecological issues, evoking empathy and fostering a sense of responsibility among viewers. The incorporation of multimodal emotional elements adds another layer of engagement, enhancing the emotional and sensory aspects.

Further perspectives include studying other multimodal strategies in Greenpeace's videos. By understanding the dynamics of audience engagement through these strategies, future studies can reveal multimodal aspects of meaning-making. Additionally, examining the role of social media in the dissemination of these narratives can illuminate new perspectives for mobilizing collective action and creating a sense of community around environmental issues.

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Tetiana Krysanova (Dr. philol.) is a full professor in linguistics at Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University (Ukraine). Her main research interests involve multimodal discourse analysis, cognitive pragmatics, and cognitive semiotics.

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9456-3845

Email: krysanova@vnu.edu.ua