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Representing nonhuman animals as equals: An ecolinguistic analysis of vegan campaigns

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Abstract: Ecolinguistics studies the interactions between language and ecology. It investigates whether the stories created by language are destructive or beneficial to all the constituents of the environment. In search of positive stories for our environment, this article focuses on vegan campaigns which generally bring awareness about veganism that, in turn, advocates protection of nonhuman animals and abstention from their exploitation. Nonhuman animals are part of the ecosystem and the way they are portrayed in language may determine the relationship between human and nonhuman animals. As vegan campaigns refer to nonhuman animals as sentient living beings, it is important to analyze whether the language and image of these campaigns articulate their purposes and create beneficial stories for nonhuman species. This article explores the stories regarding nonhuman animals in 27 posters of the vegan campaign "Go Vegan World" and examines how these stories are shaped and whether they are aligned with vegan values. The study is approached from an ecolinguistic perspective with a focus on multimodality where the language was analyzed through van Leeuwen's Social Actor and Social Action theory, and the image was analyzed with Kress and van Leeuwen's Grammar of Visual Design. Further, the analysis involves the ecosophy defined as a personal ecological philosophy of relationships between human and nonhuman animals, plants, and the physical environment. The findings suggest that the campaign language and image shape three stories: *salience* where nonhuman animals are individuals with their own feelings and lives; *conviction*

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that nonhuman animals matter as much as humans; *ideology* where biocentrism is promoted. By comparing these stories with the article's ecosophy, an ecolinguistic analysis showed that they are largely beneficial in representing nonhuman animals as sentient living beings who are equal to humans.

Keywords: ecolinguistics; multimodality; nonhuman animals; posters; veganism

1 Introduction

This article aims to demonstrate the importance of both language and image in shaping stories about who nonhuman animals (species other than humans) are, and analyze how the language and image of vegan campaigns create stories (Stibbe 2015), that is, cognitive structures that exist in the mind of people and eventually influence how they think, talk, or act. These stories are further identified from an ecolinguistic perspective as either beneficial or destructive with regard to nonhuman animals, hence beneficial or destructive to the environment and the natural world. According to Steffensen and Fill (2014), ecolinguistics provides a possibility to reunite the world of living nature with the nature of human society. Veganism, in its turn, can be understood as a philosophy and a way of living characterized by exclusion, as far as is practicable and possible, of exploitation and cruelty to animals for food, clothing, or any other purpose.[1] In veganism, the focus often lies on nonhuman animals and the fact that they are sentient living beings; hence they deserve to live their own lives. Nonhuman beings are part of the ecosystem. They live and share the planet with humans in all the diversity of its nature. This may explain why veganism, and in particular, the representation of nonhuman animals in veganism could be of interest to ecolinguistics. The growing consumption of meat and other animal products also leads to increasing practices of intensive agriculture which negatively affect the environment through deforestation, water and land pollution, and inefficient land use to mention a few. The more humans connect with nonhuman animals, the more likely they are to adopt a vegan lifestyle or some other lifestyle changes, which can lead to decreased meat consumption and fewer animal agriculture practices, resulting in less harm to the environment and less ecological destruction. Such a connection could be established if human beings perceive nonhuman animals as sentient beings who, like to humans, want to live their own lives, create families, and experience a range of feelings, instead of being perceived merely as products and things. Vegan campaigns may be

1 https://goveganworld.com/what-is-veganism/ (accessed 5 January 2019).

an example of how language and images can be used to represent nonhuman animals in a more favorable light.

Previous studies have examined the representation of nonhuman animals in animal agriculture discourse – for example, the dairy, egg, and meat industries – and in animal liberation discourse (Jacobs et al. 2016; Shapiro 1995; Stibbe 2001, 2012). In the case of the representation of nonhuman animals in veganism, these are texts about animal rights, the relationship between human and nonhuman animals, as well as awareness campaigns which adopt the philosophy of veganism. This study examines 27 posters from the "Go Vegan World" campaign, and uses ecolinguistics to study the use of language and images to represent nonhuman animals in these posters. Since it focuses on both language and images, this study carries out a multimodal analysis of these posters. It argues that the posters' use of language and images shape stories about nonhuman animals that emphasize who they are and their being equal to human beings in an attempt to change the public's views and actions toward nonhuman animals. It is important to add that the organizers of the vegan campaign generally have a pro-vegan message; hence, their posters are expected to reflect this message. It should not be surprising if the stories eventually show nonhuman animals in a favorable light. However, these types of stories may still be unique to these posters. This vegan campaign analysis is particularly unique as it draws upon ecolinguistics and, as a result, it offers a new perspective to the nonhuman animal protection movement in terms of message strategies for vegan campaigns.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Research in ecolinguistics

Ecolinguistics critically reflects upon the anthropocentric worldviews that is embedded in human language. It focuses on how language can promote ecocentric and biocentric worldviews which reflect the intrinsic value of all life on Earth (Trampe 2008: 52). Ecolinguistics may be interpreted in a variety of ways, the reason for which lies in the fact that there have been different interpretations of the word "ecology" (Stibbe 2015: 8). These range from a broad concept of interaction of some things with others to a narrow concept associated with environmentalism. This breadth has led ecolinguists to conduct analyses about the natural environment in general, investigate the relationships between words and objects in a given environment, and study dialects in different geographical locations. However, one goal in carrying out an ecolinguistic analysis is to bring up salience, or importance, of ecosystems to the stage where the more-than-human world is brought to the

minds of readers (Stibbe 2015: 163). In short, ecolinguistics draws on a critical analysis of the language by applying a theoretical framework that explores how language is central to the creation of stories, assumptions, and ideologies, and how these stories impact our more-than-human world (Abram 1996; Fill and Mühlhäusler 2001).

Ecolinguistics tend to critique forms of language that lead to ecological destruction. Early ecolinguistic work (e.g. Halliday 1992) focused on how growthism, sexism, classism, and speciesism are manifested in the lexical and syntactic structures of language. Subsequent studies have examined language's relationship to the environment and climate change (Bundsgaard and Bang 2019; Fill and Mühlhäusler 2001; Franz 2018; Poole 2006), sustainability (Ihlen and Roper 2014; Kowalski 2013), advertising (Decorte 2018; Grabowski 2007; Stibbe 2015), and nonhuman animals (Cook 2015; Fusari 2018; Goatly 2006; Simotwo 2019; Stibbe 2012, 2015).

Specifically, studies have examined how language about the environment is used to downplay or deflect attention away from environmental issues (Harré et al. 1999; Mühlhäusler 2003). For example, Poole (2006) examined how the phrase "climate change" replaced "global warming" and pointed out that the latter one sounds more threatening. Goatly (2001) pointed out that environmental issues are inadequately presented by ordinary language, and that to downplay anthropocentrism we ought to introduce more "consonant" grammars that use nominalization and grammatical metaphors. Mühlhäusler (2001 [1983]: 33) have suggested that environmental discourse leans on euphemisms, and that "they (euphemisms) prove that there is something out there that is not made what it is by being given a pretty name" and when they are applied, "the humble will be raised and the horrible will be transfigured".

Climate change is one of the issues heavily addressed today in the global arena and it has been analyzed from an ecolinguistic perspective. Among a number of studies, Bundsgaard and Bang (2019) studied the speeches and writings of Greta Thunberg, a climate youth activist from Sweden, and analyzed how she uses language to frame the climate crisis and to place responsibility on decision makers as well as other people with power to make a difference. The study found that Thunberg leaned on high modality patterns, metaphors, and deixis to express the urgency of the crisis and promote a changing understanding of the need for action.

In contrast with the studies that focus on identifying language which is destructive towards the natural world, there have also been studies conducted in search of beneficial language (e.g. Bundsgaard and Bang 2019; Miao 2019; Stibbe

2015). For example, Stibbe (2015) studied how Japanese haikus see nature as salient and worthy of poetic attention, as in the line "The autumn drizzling rain. In a flash, the pine trees get wet".[2]

It should be noted that the literature lacks studies employing Stibbe's (2015) ecolinguistic approach which focuses on identifying stories that are further compared to the ecosophy of an ecolinguist. However, there have already been different ecosophies adopted such as "Ecosophy T" by Arne Naess (1989), "Living!" and "Ecological civilization!" by Stibbe (2015, 2018).

2.2 Research on representation of nonhuman animals

Since ecolinguistics deals with how humans may impact a more-than-human world through the language they use, it would be interesting to look at the relationship between the human and nonhuman worlds, in particular, nonhuman animals world where this study's focus lies in. Halliday (1992) observed that languages do not seem to admit nonhuman agents – for instance, languages' pronominal systems refer to human beings as "he" or "she" and to nonhuman animals as "it". Some scholars (e.g. Stibbe 2015; Trampe 1990) have criticized the language of industrial agriculture for euphemistically referring to the mass murder and farming of animals under the auspices of "production". In addition, they have asserted that the very way in which we refer to human beings and animals in dichotomous, binary ways (e.g. human/nonhuman, people/animals) creates a kind of distance or separation between the two.

These kinds of lexical choices have draw attention from many linguists. Studies of specialist discourses of animal product industries (e.g. Adams 2010; Glenn 2004; Kahn 1992; Singer 1990; Stibbe 2012, 2015) have revealed how grammatical constructions, metaphors, pronouns, and other linguistic features represent nonhuman animals as machines, objects, and inferior beings. These linguistic features increase the distance between human and nonhuman animals and justify the former's exploitation of the latter. As Grauerholz (2007: 349) observes, "when animals are disguised as meat, when a 'her' becomes 'it' and is eaten, there is no question who is dominant, whether or not this domination is consciously experienced or acknowledged." This leads people to disassociate the nonhuman animals with their food is made from (Adams 2010; Dunayer 2001; Stibbe 2001), thus justifying, enabling, and sustaining meat consumption and related industries.

2 https://www.masterpiece-of-japanese-culture.com/literatures-and-poems/haiku/matsuo-basho/haiku-poems-autumn-matsuo-basho (accessed 12 March 2019).

Interestingly, previous studies (Bastian et al. 2012; Butterfield et al. 2012; Niemyjska et al. 2018) have shown that anthropomorphic representations of nonhuman animals can promote vegan attitudes. For instance, Wang and Basso (2019) studied the effect of the metaphorical phrase "animals are friends" on people's meat consumption and found that exposure to this metaphor triggered feelings of guilt among meat consumers and negatively affected their meat consumption patterns and their attitudes toward eating meat. Likewise, Cooke (2014) found that emphasizing similarities between human and nonhuman animals can stimulate the former's compassion and empathy toward the latter. This so-called similarity approach highlights nonhuman animals' characteristics and behaviors which are similar to humans' (Hills 2005; White 2007).

Other scholars have proposed changes to the language we use to refer to animals in order to effect practical change. For instance, Dunayer (2001) proposed that we avoid speciesist language, beliefs, and practices that imply or assert that human beings are superior to nonhuman animals. Proposed changes include changing "anything" (in reference to nonhuman animals) to "anyone" or "anybody"; "it" to "he" or "she" or "they"; "which" to "who"; "animals" to "nonhuman animals"; and phrases like "beef,""pork," and "veal" (which disguise the animal origins of food products) to "cow flesh," "pig flesh," "calf flesh," and so on.

Previous studies on vegan and animal welfare campaigns (e.g. Fernández 2019; Freeman 2010; Moore 2014; Scudder and Mills 2009; Waters 2015; Williams 2012) have focused on how vegan organizations use language to frame the exploitation of nonhuman animals as a moral issue. Freeman (2010), for instance, studied "Go Veg" campaigns by focusing on how these organizations framed the problems in the campaigns which came down to the following four frames: cruelty and suffering, commodification, harm to humans and the environment, and needless killing.

Moore (2014) combined systemic functional linguistics, sociolinguistics and ecolinguistics to study an animal welfare campaign which used mock recipe cards and tried to highlight how habitual language patterns make meat-eating and factory framing appear natural. One of the observations of the study particularly stood out, the phenomenon of "the absent referent" (Adams 2010: 13), which presupposes the individual nonhuman animal, is excluded from the discourses and practices which leads to the oppression of this individual. Scudder and Mills (2009) studied the impact of a graphic animal rights campaign launched by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) against alleged abuses on a corporate farm. Results indicated that PETA's attack message against abuses at corporate pig farms was effective in eroding the credibility of the corporate food industry raising animals for consumption. At the same time, PETA's credibility rose overall after participants viewed the PETA attack message.

While language analysis has been applied to studies of oppressive discourses (agribusiness, advertising, etc.), few ecolinguistic studies have examined positive discourses which promote harmonious and respectful relationships with nature, ecological systems, and nonhuman animals. Furthermore, a multimodal approach has often been disregarded in previous ecolinguistic studies. This study addresses these gaps by adopting a multimodal approach into the ecolinguistic area and identifying the stories (based on Stibbe's [2015] forms of stories) related to the representation of nonhuman animals. By incorporating van Leeuwen's (2008) Social Actor and Social Action theory, as well as Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Grammar of Visual Design, it is shown how campaign posters, in particular advertising posters, can be approached from the a multimodal perspective.

3 Methodology

The data of this study consists of the 27 most frequently seen vegan posters of the UK campaign "Go Vegan World". They are obtained from the campaign website[3] and permission to use them was granted by the campaign's organizer. The "Go Vegan World" campaign is a good subject for analysis because it is both the first large-scale national public vegan campaign in Europe and the largest, longest-running vegan campaign in the world. The campaign aims to educate the public about nonhuman animal rights, promote veganism, and challenge the legal status of other animals as human property.

This study applies a multimodal approach to the study of the "Go Vegan World" campaign's use of language and images. It also identifies the stories told in the campaign and compares them with the ecosophy of the study. Multimodal analysis is used to investigate how a combination of different semiotic resources – such as spoken and written language, gaze, proximity, and movement – are implemented to construe meaning (O'Halloran et al. 2011: 110). This study's multimodal analysis draws from several theoretical perspectives: van Leeuwen's (2008) Social Actor and Social Action theory and Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Grammar of Visual Design.

We carried out our social actor analysis by implementing a socio-semantic framework that examines lexico-grammatical and discourse-level linguistic features as well as transitivity patterns. It is a detailed system and only a few features are explored in this article, namely inclusion and exclusion (actors are either part of the described situation or excluded from it), activation and passivation (actors perform active roles or are represented as being the recipient of an action),

3 https://goveganworld.com/ (accessed 5 January 2019).

individualization which is realized by singularity (actors are referred to individually), genericization and specification (actors are represented as groups and classes or as specific individuals), personalization (realized by personal or possessive pronouns where actors are regarded as a person, someone who possesses human like characteristics), and impersonalization (realized by different means such as abstraction, where the meaning excludes the semantic feature "human") (van Leeuwen 2008: 23–54). The social action network focuses on whether social actors are involved in action which can be further classified into material (actors perform physical actions) and reaction (actors demonstrate mental processes, such as showing feelings) (van Leeuwen 2008: 73). Social action in the campaign is also addressed from the perspective of whether it is activation where social actors are represented as the active forces in the activity or deactivation. Implementing this social action theory, actions may be defined as transactive (where the action involves two participants: the "actor", the one who does the action, and the "goal", the one who receives the action) and non-transactive (actions involving only one participant). Transactive actions can further be classified as interactive and instrumental; in the former case, actors affect people, and in the latter, actors affect other kinds of "things". Interestingly, the social action theory has often been applied when actions are done by humans, however, this article adopts it in a rather novel way by seeing how the theory applies to the actions carried out by nonhuman actors. In short, van Leeuwen's (2008) Social Actor and Social Action framework allow us to see the detailed patterns of how nonhuman animals are represented as participants as well as what actions they are assigned and represented as being capable of performing. This helps us identify whether nonhuman animals are presented as human equals to human beings, and if so, how.

To analyze images, we used Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) framework and addressed three aspects of a given image in detail: representational meaning realized through vectors (e.g. directions created by actors' eyes, hands, arms), interactional meaning realized by the gaze, distance, and angle, and compositional meaning comprised of informational value, salience, and framing. Our analysis aimed to determine what roles nonhuman animals performed in these posters, that is, whether they are depicted as actors or interactors, how they are framed and depicted, and whether the image creates a sense of involvement or detachment.

We also used Stibbe's (2015) classification of types of stories in our analysis (see Table 1). We then related the stories to the concept of ecosophy. Proposed by Naess (1989), the founder of Deep Ecology movement, ecosophy was defined as

Table 1: Stibbe's (2015: 17) forms of stories.

Form of story (cognitive, i.e. in people's minds)	Definition
Ideology	A story of how the world is and should be which is shared by members of a group
Framing	A story that uses a frame (a packet of knowledge about an area of life) to structure another area of life
Metaphors (a type of framing)	A story that uses a frame to structure a distinct and clearly different area of life
Evaluation	A story about whether an area of life is good or bad
Identity	A story about what it means to be a particular kind of person
Conviction	A story about whether a particular description of the world is true, uncertain or false
Erasure	A story that an area of life is unimportant or unworthy of consideration
Salience	A story that an area of life is important and worthy of consideration

"a philosophy of ecological harmony" (Naess 1995: 8). Ecosophy has been used in a rather practical way by Stibbe (2015). According to Stibbe (2015), it is defined as a personal ecological philosophy of relationships between human and nonhuman animals as well as plants and the physical environment. It comprises of values, "value priority announcements" (Naess 1995: 8) or principles along with the assumptions with regard to the relationships between humans, other forms of life, and the physical environment. These principles are applied in order to analyze the stories, whether they are running against the ecosophy or are aligned with it. It should be stated clearly that, since shaping an ecosophy involves a set of principles or values, there will not be one correct ecosophy on which the whole area of ecolinguistics should be based. Prior to formulating an ecosophy, an analyst takes into consideration a number of different schools of thought and philosophies and either adopts them into a personal ecological philosophy or builds a new ecosophy by combining them and widening or creating new perspectives (Stibbe 2015). The ecosophy of this article is based on what we call "Vecosophy", a combination of the words "vegan" and "ecosophy". We selected this term to highlight our indebtedness to the values of deep ecology and veganism. To be specific, Vecosophy includes such values as life, respect, morality, equality, compassion, freedom, and sustainability. These values were formulated based on a preliminary study of the campaign, as well as basic principles of the schools of thought.

4 Analysis

The analysis first explores the language features of the campaigns, and later the image features. Then it discusses the contribution of language and image together to the stories of the campaigns.

4.1 Language analysis

In this part of the analysis, we categorize the posters by roles identified in social actor and social action. Nonhuman animals are represented in language as living, sentient beings worthy of respect via language in several ways. First of all, nonhuman animals are activated and represented as agents. Their agency is made clearly by posters which depict them showing affection (e.g. Example 1) or having desires and needs similar to those of humans (e.g. Example 2). This anthropomorphization allows people viewing the posters to "see a human in nonhuman forms" (Aggarwal and McGill 2007: 468), that is, project human behavior onto nonhuman animals, and thus form a kind of moral or sympathetic connection with the latter. Nonhuman animals are activated in these posters via language by being placed in a subject position, such as in the phrases "they love" (Example 1) and "they want" (Example 2). In Examples 14 and 16, nonhuman animals take the subject position along with humans, through the contrast created by the personal pronouns "they" and "we" and the opposing actions "trust" and "betray".

Nonhuman participants are also genericized in a number of posters (Examples 1, 2, 14, 16) with the pronoun "they" (van Leeuwen 2008: 35). However, there are some traces of differentiation between human and nonhuman actors in the use of the words "them" and "us" (van Leeuwen 2008: 40). As we will see in Section 4.2, the images on the posters are very important here – without these images, which represent nonhuman animals are individuals, this kind of language (e.g. "like us" in Example 1, 2, 16, 18, 20) would clearly differentiate between a human "us" and a nonhuman "they," which would create a kind of moral of affective distance between the two.

Nonhuman animals are referred to as "mothers" (Examples 4, 14, 24) which is the case of specification and anthropomorphism where nonhuman animals, equal to humans, perform the role of mothers. For instance, Examples 4, 14, 24 refer to animals as "mothers," which implies that dairy calves are babies who need their mothers around to care for them. In a similar vein, we see specification at work in Example 5 when hatchlings are described as "male chicks," that is, not as inanimate objects and products, but living beings with gender.

Another distinct feature in the analyzed campaign is objectivation when social actors are represented in reference to a location, thing that they might be associated with and actions they might be engaged in (van Leeuwen 2008). Specifically, the posters represent nonhuman animals in ways which draw attention to how they are raised only for slaughter and for human consumption as food or other animal products (Examples 3, 4, 6–10). Although the posters individualize and specify nonhuman animals as distinct beings, they are still clearly represented as victims of human actions – largely as food products such as milk (Example 3), meat (Example 6), and eggs (Examples 5 and 7) which require the nonhuman animal's death. These posters also portray nonhuman animals as passive recipients of industrial processes which reduce them to products – for instance, in Examples 3, 5, 6, and 7. Even though the posters make attempts to represent nonhuman animals as living beings with the help of such linguistic features as personal or indefinite pronouns "she", "someone" (Examples 8, 19) or anthropomorphic relationships that evoke sympathy (Exmaples 3 and 4), they are still depicted as passive agents who receive an action. They are never presented as performing an action.

One more interesting detail traced in the language of the "Go Vegan World" campaign is individualization. In Example 4, a nonhuman animal is activated as an individualized gendered living being through the personal pronoun "she" and the possessive phrases "her calves," "her life," and "her natural lifespan." The same goes for Examples 9, 10, and 11 ("he," "her," and "his" repspectively). Interestingly, in Examples 8 and 12, singular pronouns also take the subject position and exhibit possession ("she has one precious life"), foreground depictions of nonhuman animals as beings (rather than things) whose value is not purely instrumental. Furthermore, these animals are objectivated by someone taking their lives. In Examples 10, 11, 12, the phrases "her life" and "his life" activate the nonhuman nonhuman actors by directly addressing human beings' power and the choice to take these lives or not. In a similar vein, nonhuman animals are individualized through a personal pronoun (Examples 8, 9, 12–14) and activated by taking an actor position, they are also grammatically passivated and turned into a goal of human actions.

The posters only depict human beings as performing material actions. This suggests a radical difference in human and nonhuman beings' power (Adams 2010; Fusari 2018; Stibbe 2015) where humans are capable of performing material actions, and non-humans are not. In clauses like, "should your breakfast cost his life?" (Example 9), "will your dinner take it?" (Example 12), and "will your lunch take hers?" (Example 15), nouns such as "breakfast," "dinner," and "lunch," which only arise in human contexts, are used in conjunction with the possessive adjective "your," placing an onus on the reader to make a moral choice. Similarly, nonhuman animals are passivated by becoming a goal of material processes (e.g. Examples 13, 14, 24) and a phenomenon of mental processes (e.g. Examples 16, 23).

This reflects an anthropocentric and dichotomous view of human-nonhuman relationships (Fusari 2018).

4.2 Image analysis

4.2.1 Representational meaning

With regard to the representational meaning, the campaign posters are characterized by both narrative and conceptual representation.

In Example 1, a mother and baby calf stand close to each other. The calf reaches up to the mother (the vector) and looks at her (reactional process) while looking straight at the viewer. This is a transactional action that tells a story of affection. However, despite the love and connection they share, they are not free – the viewer can see their tagged ears and understand that their being is, in human eyes, reduced to their instrumentality. Posters in the "Go Vegan World" campaign also demonstrate another narrative action in which humans are involved. In Example 15, there is an unfolding unidirectional transactional process in the representation of a human being above (as shown in the image) the non-human (fish), hence being more powerful than the fish – the human is an actor and the fish is a goal. This is yet another example that suggests human domination over nonhuman animals, which Stibbe (2019) refers to as "Who eats who?". Humans are also involved in the posters where the concept of trust is highlighted with language stating "They trust us". Some images in the "Go Vegan World" campaign have a narrative representation where the vectors are seen coming both from nonhuman and human participants – a human touching, holding or giving food to nonhuman animals, who in turn display trust towards people by coming closer without any fear.

The other kind of representation is conceptual where nonhuman animals represented in the image are not connected by vectors to any other actors but simply engaged in their own activity or looking at the viewer. This kind of representation may serve to identify the one who is depicted in the poster, the carrier, as well as letting viewers scrutinize the carrier's attributes (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006: 89). In particular, the viewer can observe the feelings experienced by nonhuman animals in the images, either the feeling of joy (Example 2) or sadness (Example 18). This, in turn, gives an opportunity to contemplate that these are sentient living beings who, similarly to humans, can be affected by circumstances which cause a range of feelings.

4.2.2 Interactional meaning

Here, we paid attention to the gaze, distance, and angle used in the posters. gaze include both demand and offer images (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006: 118–119). When nonhuman animals appear to look straight at the viewer, they demand engagement and enter into a relationship with the viewer. For example, in Examples 18 and 19, the nonhuman animals' gaze invites the viewer to identify them as a feeling, sentient being with human qualities and relate to them. In this way, they are rather anthropomorphic. This is also true of Examples 3 and 6, which depict calves looking at the viewer accompanied by the text "huamne milk/meat is a myth, don't by it." With a help of the image, the meaning of "humane is a myth" becomes clearer – no matter whether milk or meat was produced humanely as claimed, a calf is still a victim. Demand images in this case encourage viewers to contemplate the message. By contrast, offer images depict a nonhuman animal looking away from the viewer (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006: 119). This creates a sense of objectivity and detachment on the viewer's part.

With regard to distance, the images of the "Go Vegan World" campaign are mainly close and medium shots. Close shots involve the viewers in the represented participant's life, such as in Examples 18 and 21. In Example 18, we can see tears in the cow's eyes; In Example 21, we can see a cow close enough to reach out and touch, but separated from the viewer by a fence. By contrast, medium shots invite the viewers to be involved (especially through eye contact), but at the same time allow them to stay detached and not feel pressured. There are a few images which portray nonhuman animals at a far distance (e.g. Examples 23, 24). In these images, nonhuman animals' whole figures (rather than just their facial expressions) are visible, which strengthens their values as offer images by giving viewers the option to access a situation from a distance and not be forced to enter into a relationship with the nonhuman animals represented in the image.

Angle is another important aspect of the interaction side of images which conveys power relationships between the figures represented in the image and the viewer (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006: 140) and the degree to which viewers should feel detached or attached to the figures represented in an image (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006: 136). Most of the images in the "Go Vegan World" campaign portray nonhuman animals at a horizontal eye-level angle which suggests that the viewer and the nonhuman animals are engaged in an equal power relationship (e.g. Example 1). By contrast, in Examples 6 and 8, the viewer looks down at nonhuman animals form a slightly high angle, suggesting that the viewer is in a position to protect the depicted nonhuman animals.

4.2.3 Compositional meaning

In terms of the compositional meaning, it is the informational value which is addressed in this article. There are two types of structure with regard to informational value: "Ideal-Real" and "Given-New" (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006).

In the "Ideal-Real" structure (e.g. Example 8, 15, and 22), the text of the poster is split into three parts the top, with an ideal phrase; the middle, with an image; and the bottom, with a real phrase. Examples 15 and 22 include identical phrases at the top which compare nonhuman animals to humans ("We all …" or "Like us …") which make an emotional appeal to the reader by suggesting that human beings and nonhuman animals should be accorded equal respect and dignity. The position of this text contributes to an emotive appeal of the viewer (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006: 186). In Examples 21 and 25, the top part of the poster is often occupied by the text which exposes the reality of what happens in these industries. If the "Ideal" is considered to contribute to the emotive appeal, the producer's hope is that the viewer can connect at an emotional level with what occurs in the industry and consider the choices made in terms of consuming products coming from the represented nonhuman animals. In the "Ideal" part of Examples 6 and 21, language states that "humane meat/milk is a myth" and calls for not buying it, while in Example 25, it states in a straightforward way that "dairy takes babies from their mothers". The producer shows their hope that the viewer realizes a contrast between what they believe happens in the dairy industry and what really occurs, challenging their convictions (Stibbe 2015: 129) and that ideally, they would stop buying those products.

By posing a rhetorical question (Example 26) in the top part and highlighting a human-nonhuman relationship of trust-betrayal (Example 27), the producer projects that ideally the viewer would be able to see nonhuman animals as living beings who value their own lives and possibly see the connection between the fact that the meals humans consume directly take the lives of those living beings. It is important to note that the "Real" in campaign posters includes the name of the "Go Vegan World" campaign presented as a website address which is a rather informative and practical part of the poster. The reader's attention is brought to the name of the campaign which could work like motivation or instruction with the imperative form of the verb "go".

The "Given-New" organizational structure is presented in a number of horizontally laid-out posters (e.g. Examples 2, 4, and 20). On the left part of these posters, viewers can observe nonhuman animals performing "given" or well-known actions, such as a lamb hopping about (Example 2) or a cow caring for her baby (Example 4). These given images are juxtaposed against something "new", such as statement, "Like us, they want to stay alive", which places human beings and nonhuman animals on the same plane by hinting that the latter have richer

inner lives. In Example 4, the "New" part contains the text "Dairy takes babies", something neither known nor faced before. The viewer may be slightly pushed into contemplating that, and due to the layout, the reader has to read within this structure (commonly from left to right) even though a personal view may be different.

5 Discussion: Stories and Vecosophy

The language and image features helped to identify three main stories throughout the campaign: salience, conviction, ideology, and some elements of erasure. The first story is *salience* (Stibbe 2015: 161). In salient stories, the posters focus on nonhuman animals' identity as sentient beings with rich inner lives who are both capable of thinking/feeling/desiring and are able to perform actor in material processes and senser in mental processes. These stories bring attention to these nonhuman animals' feelings and the moral quandary of factory farming sentient beings and/or reducing them to their instrumentality for human consumption (Adams 2010; Joy 2011). Salience is particularly achieved through images in which a nonhuman animal's gaze and the horizontal angle of the photograph engages the viewer and opens up opportunities for viewers to identify and empathize with nonhuman animals across species lines (Cole and Morgan 2011: 135). As a conclusion to this story, *nonhuman animals are living beings who, just like humans, have feelings, wants, and needs*.

The second story is *conviction* (Stibbe 2015: 127) where the emphasis is on the idea that nonhuman animals have an ability to experience different feelings and have experiences in life like humans do (Alger and Alger 2003). Posters with affirmative phrases, such as "just like us", emphasize the similarities between human beings and nonhuman animals. They are also able to experience mental processes (e.g. love, trust, and other emotions) (Bekoff 2000). These statements are accompanied by images displaying nonhuman animals exhibiting care, joy, sadness, love, affection, and trust, and images which wield the viewer's gaze to invite a kind of protection and care from human beings. The "Go Vegan World" campaign does not necessarily place human beings and nonhuman animals on equal ground; instead, it highlights the conviction that they have similar capacities to feel and act, and that therefore people's attitudes and actions toward nonhuman animals are morally inderfensible. The conviction that comes out of this story is twofold, the first one is that *nonhuman animals are similar to humans* and the other one is that *people's beliefs about animal products are wrong*.

The third story is ideology (Stibbe 2015: 22), in this case biocentrism (Attfield 2014). Every campaign poster presents nonhuman animals as sentient beings and

individuals in language as well as image; however, they also present human beings as intrinsically having power over nonhuman animals (e.g."Like us," "Is an egg worth her life?" "They trust us, we betray them"). An affirmative complete statement "She has one precious life" used at the top of the campaign posters claims that nonhuman animals are sentient living beings who value their lives. Statements such as "Stop eating us" and "Will your dinner take it?" strongly suggest that if one actually sees nonhuman animals as having intrinsic value and dignity, then one must make a lifestyle change and stop support factory farming. We can also biocentric ideology in phrases such as "They trust us, we betray them", which both indicates that nonhuman animals are innocent and trusting individuals and that human beings take advantage of this trust. This biocentrism is further underscored by the fact that "they" comes first in this sentence and the fact that this image is accompanied by a photograph taken on the animal's eye level, which aims to close the perceived distance between human beings and nonhuman animals. This, in turn, may decrease a dichotomic representation of nonhuman animals (Fusari 2018). In short, this story can be stated that *all life is important*.

There is some evidence of another story running through some posters which is *erasure* (Stibbe 2015: 145). By erasure, we mean that in order to show the features of an anthropocentric world, nonhuman animals are erased or backgrounded in order for humans to be look past these values. We can see these kinds of features in language through mentioning animal products (e.g. "humane meat," "humane milk," "humane eggs"), objectifying nonhuman animals (e.g. "take his life," "we eat her," "animal testing"), and assigning material processes to people. We can see traces of erasure in some of the posters' conceptual representations of nonhuman animals where they are not doing anything but simply looking at the viewer. They can be pictured far away, or being forcefully taken from their natural habitat (e.g. a human catching a fish).

However, do these techniques really contribute to erasing nonhuman animals as sentient beings? To address this question, every time we observe passivation in the campaign, there is also the presence of activation where nonhuman animals are represented as living beings with their lives and values. In language, these would be features that bring up salience such as social actors as sensers (e.g. "trust," "feel," "love"), personalization (e.g. "she," "he," "her," "hers," "his"), specification through determination (e.g. "sister," "male calves," "mothers") which together represent nonhuman animals similar to humans, and anthropomorphize them – "seeing humans in nonhuman forms" (Aggarwal and McGill 2007: 468). In visual representation, nonhuman animals are involved in some sort of action (e.g. runing, crying, and expressing joy) or a relationship (e.g. affection between a mother and baby calf). Nonhuman animals are also portrayed at a close or medium distance,

horizontal angle, and looking at the viewer, which all together does not distance the viewer; instead, brings them closer, involves them in a nonhuman animal's life, demands attention and shows no hierarchy in power. In addition, it is important to note that the fact of nonhuman animals becoming victims of human consumption. In comparison, in industry discourses, such as dairy, meat, and egg, victims are erased (Stibbe 2012, 2015), the language does not suggest that nonhuman animals suffer or become victimized. Their language rather supports Descartes' perspective, where nonhuman animals are perceived as reactive machines (Cochrane 2010); therefore, they erase nonhuman animals as sentient living beings. In the current campaign, every analyzed poster highlights in different ways that nonhuman animals are not only living beings who are able to feel and express feelings, but are also individuals. This leads us to conclude that none of the posters erase nonhuman animals' individuality; they all assign an intrinsic value to nonhuman animal life. However, erasure techniques may suggest that the "Go Vegan World" campaign aims to establish connections between viewers and nonhuman animals which compel them to action.

A highly salient representation of nonhuman animals is traced both in language and image throughout the "Go Vegan World" campaign, depicting them with the capacity to perform mental and material processes, bringing personalization and individualization in each poster of the nonhuman; conviction that nonhuman animals are similar to humans and that people's beliefs about animal products are wrong; and the ideology of biocentrism. This eventually contributes to strengthening the ecosophy of this article, Vecosophy, which includes such values as life, respect, morality, equality, compassion, freedom, and sustainability. The closer a connection is established between human and nonhuman animals, the less likely nonhuman animals are to become victims of food choices that have an impact on the environment.

It is important to point out that although a variety of linguistic features – such as nonhuman animals taking a subject position in phrases, being sensers as well as doers, specification, personalization, anthropomorphism, and individualization – create a salient story, language alone cannot create a sufficiently strong story. Images enhance and strengthen these stories by inviting viewers to engage nonhuman animals' suffering and forge a close relationship with them. In a similar way, an image alone cannot create a sufficiently strong story regarding nonhuman animals' individuality to compel an individual to action. The dynamic interaction of language and images, not the composition of an image itself, is the key to creating particularly powerful meaning.

6 Conclusion

In this article, we looked at the representation of nonhuman animals in 27 campaign posters from the British pro-vegan campaign "Go Vegan World". Our qualitative analysis explored how an ecolinguistic approach can help us better understand the stories (cf. Stibbe 2015) created by the confluence of image and language, and whether these stories carry a message which aligns with biocentric values. Our multimodal analysis found that the language features of the campaign – individualization, specification, genericization, and differentiation – often resulted in anthropomorphism, activation, and passivation of nonhuman animals, while the images were mainly characterized as demand images through horizontal angle and close distance. We assert that three main stories emerged from the data – salience, conviction, and ideology – and that some elements of another type of story, erasure, were observed in the data. Besides, all of these stories align with Vecosophy, the ecosophy of this study.

The "Go Vegan World" pro-vegan message makes these findings unsurprising; however, the types of stories found here are unique to posters, with their mix of language and images. Comparing the findings of this study with those of other studies of nonhuman animal rights or vegan campaigns, we find that the stories of the "Go Vegan World" campaign focus more on establishing quality for nonhuman animals rather than focusing on nonhuman animal rights broadly. These stories may encourage people to look at nonhuman animals as individuals who have their own feelings, lives, and interests, and in this respect, they become equal to humans. Therefore, the stories are beneficial to nonhuman species because they contradict mainstream industrial and agricultural discourse that people are exposed to on a daily basis through advertisements, general discussions about food, restaurant menus, packaging, etc.

This study contributes to the concept of stories in ecolinguistics, particularly how the stories beneficial to nonhuman animals are created. It demonstrates what kind of language and image features can be implemented in vegan and animal advocacy in order to show that nonhuman animals are individual living beings who deserve to live their lives. This, in turn, may contribute to creating a harmonious relationship between human and nonhuman animals. Further analysis could be conducted on vegan campaigns with a focus on public perception and campaign techniques which particularly encourage empathy to nonhuman animals. Future studies could also consider videos and talks rather than still image posters. Furthermore, vegan campaigns could be subjected to an an ecological discourse analysis from the perspective of systemic functional linguistics with application of eco-grammar.

Acknowledgments: We thank the "Go Vegan World" campaign organizers for their permission to use their campaign posters.

Appendix

Example 1

Example 2

Example 3

(continued)

Example 4

Example 5

Example 6

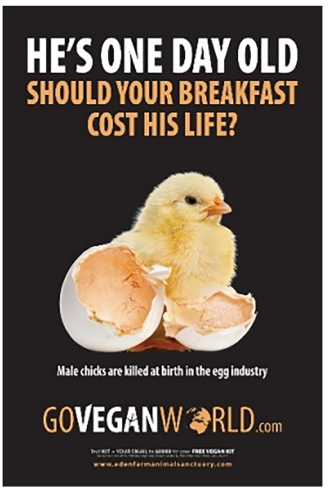
(continued)

Example 7

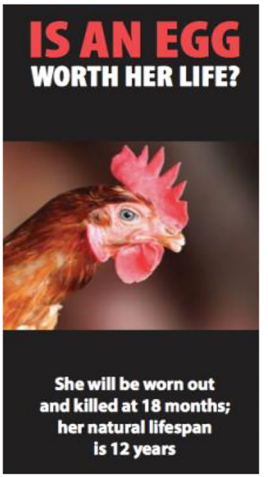
Example 8

(continued)

Example 9



Example 10



(continued)

Example 11

Example 12

Example 13

(continued)

Example 14

Example 15

Example 16

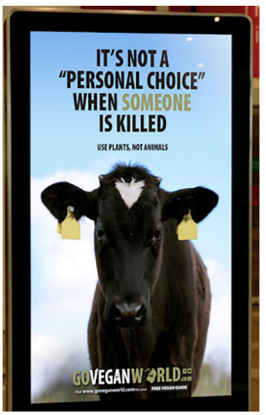
(continued)

Example 17

Example 18

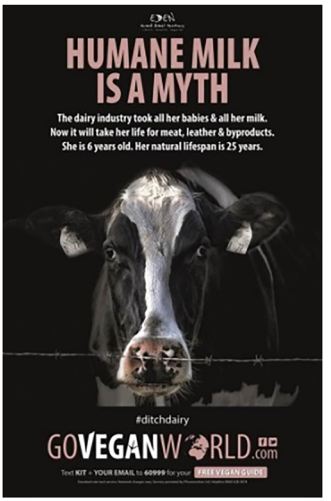
(continued)

Example 19



Example 20

Example 21



(continued)

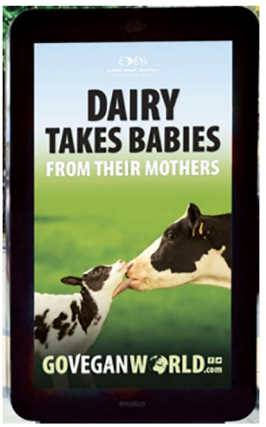
Example 22

Example 23

Example 24

(continued)

Example 25



Example 26

(continued)

Example 27

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