



PARIWISATA, BUDAYA DAN BAHASA

BUKU PERSEMBAHAN ULANG TAHUN KE-75

**Dr. I Made Sudjana,
SE, M.M., CHT, CHA**



Editor:

Made Budiarsa

Ida Bagus Putra Yadnya

I Nyoman Sedeng

I Nengah Sudipa

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Institut Pariwisata dan Bisnis Internasional (IPBI)
Tahun 2025

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6.

LINGUAL UNITS IN COMMERCIAL ECOLOGICAL PRACTICES: AN ECOLINGUISTIC STUDY OF ECO-FRIENDLY HOTELS IN BALI

Dr. I Gede Astawa, M.Hum

Email: astawa.akpardps@gmail.com

Akademi Pariwisata Denpasar

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan mengungkap peran satuan lingual dalam membentuk wacana keberlanjutan pada hotel-hotel ramah lingkungan di Bali melalui pendekatan ekolinguistik kritis. Analisis difokuskan pada dua elemen utama: metafora konseptual dan eufemisme dalam materi promosi daring. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa bahasa digunakan secara strategis untuk membangun citra ekologis, merumuskan identitas merek, serta mereduksi kompleksitas isu lingkungan dalam narasi yang ramah pasar. Metafora seperti eco-conscious design dan green energy membentuk cara pandang terhadap keberlanjutan sebagai gaya hidup, sedangkan eufemisme digunakan untuk menormalisasi praktik komersial dalam kerangka kapitalisme hijau. Studi ini memperkuat pentingnya kajian kritis terhadap representasi bahasa dalam komunikasi ekologi serta menawarkan kontribusi teoretis dan praktis bagi pengembangan strategi komunikasi yang etis dan berkeadilan ekologis dalam industri perhotelan berkelanjutan.

Kata kunci: ekolinguistik, hotel ramah lingkungan, metafora, eufemisme, komunikasi keberlanjutan.

Abstract

This study aims at revealing the role of linguistic units in shaping sustainability discourse in eco-friendly hotels in Bali through a critical ecolinguistic approach. The analysis focuses on two main elements: conceptual metaphors and euphemisms in online promotional materials. The results show that language is used strategically to build an ecological image, formulate brand identity, and reduce the complexity of environmental issues in a market-friendly narrative. Metaphors such as eco-conscious design and green energy shape the way sustainability is viewed as a lifestyle, while euphemisms are used to normalize commercial practices within the framework of green capitalism. This study reinforces the importance of critical examination of language representation in ecological communication

and offers theoretical and practical contributions to the development of ethical and ecologically just communication strategies in the sustainable hospitality industry.

Keywords: ecolinguistics, eco-friendly hotels, metaphors, euphemisms, sustainability communication

I. INTRODUCTION

Environmental sustainability issues have become an increasingly pressing global concern in the face of the climate crisis and widespread ecosystem degradation due to irresponsible human activities. In the tourism sector, the hospitality industry is one of the sub-sectors that contributes most to environmental pressures such as excessive energy consumption, solid waste, and massive water use (Gössling et al., 2012). Therefore, the transformation towards environmentally friendly hospitality practices is one of the strategic solutions to reduce negative impacts while meeting the demands of the tourist market that is increasingly concerned about sustainability aspects.

The eco-friendly hotel phenomenon in Bali stands out as a clear example of how tourist destinations that are highly dependent on natural ecosystems are starting to adopt a green paradigm in their operations and businesses. Hotels that carry this concept place sustainability not only as a technical practice, but also as part of their brand identity and guest experience, through the use of renewable energy, ecological building design, and local conservation programs (Herini et al., 2024; Mananda & Sudiarta, 2024). In this context, Bali is not only an attractive tourist destination, but also a place for innovative and complex experiments in sustainability communication.

One crucial but often overlooked dimension in eco-friendly hospitality practices is the role of language as a tool for constructing reality and shaping social perceptions of ecological issues. The language used by these hotels in various promotional materials, such as websites, brochures, and social media, serves to build the narrative and identity of sustainability that they want to convey to the public. Through ecolinguistics, which is the study of the relationship between language and the environment, we can see how language not only

describes facts but also shapes the way we understand and interact with nature.

This study focuses on the analysis of linguistic units such as metaphors and euphemisms contained in Bali's eco-friendly hotel communications. Metaphors play a role in transforming abstract concepts of sustainability into more concrete and evocative images; while euphemisms are used to present technical or controversial issues in a more friendly and persuasive way (Charteris-Black, 2018; Semino, 2008) This approach is expected to open up a deeper understanding of how language functions as a tool for social negotiation and business strategy in the ecologically oriented commercial realm.

The main objective of this study is to identify and analyze the use of these lingual units in the construction of sustainability narratives by eco-friendly hotels in Bali. Through a qualitative ecolinguistic approach, this study aims to enrich the study of ecological language theory while providing relevant empirical contributions to the development of effective and authentic green communication in the hospitality industry.

The benefits of this research are not only academic by expanding the literature on ecolinguistics and environmental communication, but also practical in providing guidance for hotel industry players and marketers in designing communication strategies that can build trust, ecological awareness, and consumer loyalty in the increasingly competitive era of sustainable tourism (Hadi, 2023; Tölkes, 2018). Thus, this research targets the need to have a language approach that is not only informative, but also transformative to realize a friendly and responsible tourism future.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Concept of Ecolinguistics and the Role of Language in the Social and Cultural Environment

Ecolinguistics is an interdisciplinary field that studies the relationship between language and the environment, both natural and social (Stibbe, 2015). This approach highlights the role of language in shaping how humans view and treat nature, and how environmental

discourse reflects certain cultural values, ideologies, and practices (Fill & Muhlhausler, 2006). In this perspective, language is not considered a neutral tool, but rather an ideological vehicle that can strengthen or challenge prevailing social and ecological systems.

This concept is important in the hospitality context because the use of language in marketing communications, internal policies, and interactions with consumers can reinforce sustainable values or, conversely, create a false image through manipulative narratives (Alexander & Stibbe, 2014). Ecological language also plays a role in shaping people's ecological awareness, building emotional connections with nature, and inviting participation in environmental conservation.

2.2 Definition and Theory of Lingual Units: Metaphor and Euphemism

Lingual units are linguistic elements that convey meaning in a particular context. In this study, the focus is directed at three main units: metaphor, framing, and euphemism. Metaphor is understood as a conceptual means to understand one domain of experience through another domain, such as interpreting sustainability as a “journey,” “struggle,” or “investment in the future” (Charteris-Black, 2018; Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, 2008). Ecological metaphors can help audiences understand abstract environmental issues in a more concrete and emotional way.

Meanwhile, euphemism or softening of meaning is a form of word choice that aims to soften messages that have the potential to cause resistance or negative images (Allan & Burridge, 2006). In the context of hospitality, euphemism is used to convey issues such as reduced facilities or changes in consumption policies in a way that still sounds positive, such as replacing "AC restrictions" with "energy wise commitment."

2.3 Previous Studies on Language in the Context of Sustainability and Eco-Friendly Hospitality

Research on sustainability discourse in the tourism and hospitality sectors shows increasing attention to the strategic role of

language in shaping an eco-friendly image. Alexander and Stibbe (Alexander & Stibbe, 2014) highlight that ecological narratives in the media and commercial sector can shape public understanding of the relationship between humans and nature in both constructive and manipulative ways. Delmas and Burbano (2011) add that the greenwashing phenomenon reflects an attempt to build an ecological image through communication that is not supported by real practices. In the hospitality sector, this is seen in claims such as “eco-friendly accommodation” without clear operational indicators. Metaphors such as “green oasis” are used to build emotional closeness, although often without critical evaluation of the accuracy of the ecological message (Bellehumeur & Carignan, 2024). Kim, et.al. (2012) found that positive narratives such as “eco-hero” can increase guest emotional attachment, but this study has not examined the linguistic aspect specifically. Therefore, a more explicit ecolinguistic approach is needed in examining lingual units as a sustainability communication strategy, especially in environmentally sensitive areas such as Bali.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with an ecolinguistic framework to understand how linguistic units such as metaphors and euphemisms are constructed in sustainability communication by eco-friendly hotels in Bali. This type of research is qualitative with an ecolinguistic approach, which aims to examine the role of language in shaping and disseminating sustainability discourse in the hospitality sector. This approach allows researchers to study promotional texts in depth, not only in terms of semantics, but also in terms of the underlying ideology and rhetorical strategies (Stibbe, 2015).

The data for this study were obtained from public communication materials of nine eco-friendly hotels in Bali, specifically from promotional content published on their official websites. The hotels were selected purposively based on their explicit self-identification as environmentally friendly and the presence of consistent sustainability-related narratives in their online communications.

Data was collected through documentation techniques, namely by observing, recording, and archiving promotional materials available online from the hotel/accommodation websites below.

Table 1 Names of Hotels/Accommodations and their Weblinks

No.	Nama Hotel/ Akomodasi	Weblink
1.	Bambu Indah	https://www.ubudhotelsassociation.com/member/bambu-indah-resort
2.	Potato Head Studios	https://seminyak.potatohead.co/journal/sustainable-gear-for-our-community
3.	Alila Seminyak	https://alssuites.com/sustainability.html
4.	Fivelements Retreat	https://fivelementsbari.com/
5.	Green Village	https://greenvillagebari.com/
6.	Eco Bamboo House	https://ecobamboobari.com/
7.	The Menjangan	https://lifestyletreatments.com/the-menjangan/
8.	Kayumanis Private Villas	https://www.belmond.com/hotels/asia/bali/belmond-jimbaran-puri/
9.	Bali Eco Stay	https://www.baliecostay.com/about-mountain-resort/

The collected data were then analyzed using a critical ecolinguistic approach (Stibbe, 2015), combined with elements of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2013), focusing on the identification and interpretation of conceptual metaphors and euphemisms. Each linguistic unit was examined in terms of its rhetorical and ideological function in constructing sustainability narratives and promoting a persuasive ecological image within the framework of green hospitality.

To maintain the validity and reliability of the data, this study applied the source triangulation technique by comparing data from various hotels and different types of promotional materials. In addition, the data analysis process also involved peer review to ensure objectivity and consistency of interpretation (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 The Use of Metaphors in Building Sustainability Images

Language has the power to shape how people view the world, including the natural environment. In the context of sustainability communication in the hospitality industry, the use of metaphors not only functions as a rhetorical tool, but also as an ideological means to frame the relationship between humans and nature. Therefore, it is important to analyze how conceptual metaphors are used in linguistic units that appear in marketing narratives, branding, and ecological representation practices in eco-friendly hotels.

The analysis in this section uses the critical ecolinguistics framework (Stibbe, 2015, 2020), which views language as an ideological field that can strengthen or weaken ecological sustainability. In addition, this approach is combined with Lakoff and Johnson's (2003) Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which explains that metaphor is not just a style of language, but a conceptual structure that underlies human understanding and action.

Conceptual metaphors in the context of sustainability often imply a relationship between human objects or practices and certain ecological values, such as responsibility, harmony, balance, and preservation. Through metaphors, abstractions such as “sustainability,” “environmental awareness,” or “holistic health” are realized in forms that can be understood and felt concretely. This makes metaphors an important tool in conveying ecological visions in the industrial realm. Thus, the analysis in this section aims to reveal the forms of conceptual metaphors contained in the lingual units of various eco-friendly accommodations in Bali, as well as to assess the ecological functions and ideological content contained therein. Each lingual unit will be examined in terms of metaphorical structure, the ecological meaning it contains, and the narrative implications it carries within the framework of sustainability. The following are lingual units containing metaphors found on the websites of several hotels/accommodations in Bali.

Table 2. Conceptual Metaphors in Hotel/Accommodation Websites in Bali

No.	Lingual Unit	No.	Lingual Unit
1.	"eco-conscious design"	6.	"bamboo architecture"
2.	"Sustainism Lab"	7.	"marine conservation"
3.	"green energy"	8.	"local craftsmanship"
4.	"holistic wellness"	9.	"permaculture principles"
5.	"minimal environmental impact"		

[4-1] "...eco-conscious design..."

The phrase "eco-conscious design" contains a conceptual metaphor that personifies design as an ecologically conscious entity. Within the metaphorical framework, design concepts are mapped to environmental consciousness, giving agency to the visual and structural aspects of the building.

In an ecolinguistic perspective, the use of this metaphor reflects ecological ethics integrated into the realm of aesthetics and architecture. Design does not merely function visually or functionally, but rather becomes a representation of moral values towards nature. The ecological function of this metaphor is to convey that buildings are not only beautiful but also responsible for environmental sustainability.

[4-2] "...Sustainism Lab..."

The phrase "Sustainism Lab" is a metaphorical combination of two concepts: sustainism as a sustainability ideology, and lab as a space for experimentation. This metaphor structures sustainability as something scientific, testable, and evolving, rather than a static concept. Ecolinguistic analysis shows that this phrase creates a narrative of sustainability as a dynamic epistemological process, not just a passive slogan. Its ecological function is to frame sustainability practices as progressive movements open to innovation and transformation.

[4-3] "...green energy..."

The phrase "green energy" contains a color metaphor, where "green" represents ecological values such as cleanliness,

sustainability, and connection to nature. Energy, which is colorless, is personified as something green. In ecolinguistics, this metaphor strengthens the symbolic association between the color green and environmental sustainability, thus forming a positive perception of the use of renewable energy. Its ecological function is to build the image of green energy as something “natural” and “moral.”

[4-4] “...holistic wellness...”

The phrase “holistic wellness” represents a body system metaphor that parallels the ecological system. The concept of health in this phrase includes the balance between body, mind, and the surrounding environment. From an ecolinguistic perspective, this metaphor shows a holistic ecological view, in which humans are understood as an integral part of a larger ecological system. Its ecological function is to emphasize the importance of ecological balance as part of human well-being.

[4-5] “...minimal environmental impact...”

The metaphor in this phrase uses a quantitative approach: environmental impact is positioned as something that can be measured and minimized. This concept creates a framework of thinking that is oriented towards mitigating ecological damage. Ecolinguistically, this phrase contains an ideology of control and responsibility, where human actions towards nature must be reduced to a minimum. Its ecological function is to encourage a low ecological footprint lifestyle.

[4-6] “...bamboo architecture...”

The phrase “bamboo architecture” builds a metaphor of material as ideology. Bamboo is not only referred to as a construction material, but is interpreted as a symbol of sustainability, naturalness, and locality. Within an ecolinguistic framework, this metaphor integrates local ecological and cultural values as a form of resistance to industrial architectural practices. Its ecological function is to celebrate the use of sustainable local materials, as well as to strengthen ecological and cultural identity.

[4-7] “...marine conservation...”

This phrase builds a metaphor of conservation as a form of loving protection of valuable entities. The sea is treated not as an object of exploitation, but as a subject that has the right to be preserved. Ecolinguistics interprets this metaphor as a narrative that shifts the human-environment relationship from domination to reciprocity. Its ecological function is to raise awareness that tourist areas are also educational and conservation spaces.

[4-8] “...local craftsmanship...”

The metaphor of “local craftsmanship” describes crafts as a manifestation of ecological and cultural identity. Sustainability values are not only articulated in natural forms, but also in human cultural expressions. In ecolinguistic analysis, this metaphor emphasizes the importance of social sustainability as an integral part of ecological sustainability. Its ecological function is to strengthen the narrative that preserving local culture also means maintaining the sustainability of the social ecosystem.

[4-9] “...permaculture principles...”

This phrase reflects the metaphor of ecological principles as an ethic of life. Permaculture—a portmanteau of “permanent” and “agriculture”—is used to describe a system of living that imitates and harmonizes with the patterns of nature. Ecolinguistically, this metaphor serves as a value model that encourages humans to adapt to natural ecological principles. Its ecological function is to guide individuals and communities to build a lifestyle that is long-lasting and ecologically sustainable.

4.2 Euphemism as a Language Strategy for Conveying Technical Issues Persuasively

In the practice of ecotourism and commercial ecology communication, the use of euphemisms is a very significant linguistic strategy. Euphemism in this context is not just an attempt to disguise negative meanings, but also to create a positive, innovative, and ethical image of practices that are actually technical or even

problematic. In the discourse of sustainability, the terms chosen often function to soften, divert, or normalize ecological realities, as well as to arouse the emotional involvement of the audience through more “friendly” and “optimistic” language (Cox, 2013; Mühlhäusler & Peace, 2006; Stibbe, 2015).

The following is an analysis of a number of euphemistic lingual units found in various websites of hotels, villas, and eco-friendly tourist attractions in Bali. The following are lingual units containing euphemisms in reviews of several hotels/accommodations and tourist attractions in Bali taken from websites.

Table 3. Linguistic Units Containing Euphemisms

No.	Lingual units	No.	Lingual units
1.	"Carefully Curated"	6.	"Low Carbon Footprint"
2.	"Biodegradable Slippers"	7.	"Zero Plastic Policy"
3.	"Waste Management Program"	8.	"Rainwater Harvesting"
4.	"Sustainable Packages"	9.	"Waste Reduction"
5.	"Handmade Materials"	10.	"Community Involvement"

[4-10]. "...Carefully Curated..."

This phrase is a euphemism for the activity of arranging, selecting, or managing an environment that is oriented towards aesthetics and guest comfort. The word “curated” is often used in the context of art or museums, which gives the impression of being selective, elegant, and of high value. The addition of the word “carefully” reinforces the image that this process is carried out with high attention and responsibility. Discursively, this term diverts attention from the technical or exploitative aspects of managing the hotel’s physical environment, and replaces it with a pleasant and professional narrative. This euphemism disguises the practice of arranging natural or semi-natural spaces that may sacrifice ecological authenticity, by framing it as a caring effort. This strategy reinforces the image of being environmentally friendly and culturally sensitive, while maintaining human dominance over nature in a narrative that sounds refined and civilized.

[4-11]. "...Biodegradable Slippers..."

This term replaces more direct expressions such as "biodegradable disposable sandals". The word "biodegradable" gives the impression of being scientific and environmentally friendly, while "slippers" as a daily consumer item are given added value through association with sustainability. Discursively, this euphemism softens the fact that the item is still a disposable product that creates an ecological footprint in its production and distribution. By embedding the word "biodegradable", attention is diverted from the issue of overconsumption to the illusion of ecological responsibility. This strategy supports the narrative of green consumerism, where buying new products is considered to be in line with sustainable values. In fact, structurally, the practice continues in a consumption system that exploits resources.

[4-12] "...Waste Management Program..."

This term replaces phrases that may sound less pleasant such as "waste collection and processing". This euphemism emphasizes the word "program" which implies a systematic and planned approach, and shifts attention from the aspect of waste as a "problem" to rational "management". Discursively, this is a form of softening the complex and potentially environmentally damaging operational reality into something that sounds responsible and professional.

[4-13] "...Sustainable Packages..."

This phrase is a euphemism for commercial offerings that aim to sell tourism products or services within a framework of sustainability. The word "package" which is usually associated with consumption and economic gain, is wrapped in the word "sustainable" which has ethical and ecological meanings. This combination creates the image that commercial activity is not only legitimate, but also contributes positively to the environment, even though in reality it remains within the framework of resource exploitation and consumption.

[4-14] "...Handmade Materials..."

The term euphemizes the traditional, small-scale production process, framing it as something valuable and ecological. This framing dismisses the perception that the process may be inefficient or “less modern,” and instead promotes it as an added value. This euphemism reinforces the narrative of romanticizing tradition and locality, which is often exploited in sustainable marketing.

[4-15] "...Low Carbon Footprint..."

This euphemism avoids direct terms like “climate-damaging carbon emissions” in favor of technical terms that sound light and measurable. The word “low” suggests that the impact is “minimal,” while “carbon footprint” sounds neutral and carries no explicit moral value. This strategy normalizes the existence of emissions and shifts the focus from elimination to reduction, thereby allowing for sustainability within the framework of consumption.

[4-16] "Zero Plastic Policy"

While this term may seem harsh, it is a softening of phrases like “total plastic ban.” The word “policy” conveys an administrative, non-confrontational tone, while “zero plastic” carries a strong symbolic appeal and ethical connotation. This euphemism creates the perception of drastic yet positive action, reinforcing the image that the institution or accommodation is highly committed to the environment, without sounding pushy or threatening.

[4-17] "...Rainwater Harvesting..."

The term is a euphemism for the act of collecting rainwater, which in an urban context can be considered primitive or makeshift. By choosing the word “harvesting,” the term frames the practice as active, natural, and wise. The use of this agrarian metaphor also reinforces the image of connectedness to nature and ecological innovation, while avoiding perceptions of water shortages or crises.

[4-18] "Waste Reduction"

This euphemism softens the impact of waste production by directing attention to a positive action: "reduction." It creates a sense of progressiveness and responsibility without making waste seem like a major problem. This strategy allows businesses to maintain environmental legitimacy without having to stop waste-producing practices altogether.

[4-19] "...Community Involvement..."

In practice, local community involvement can be very limited, symbolic, or merely complementary to tourism projects. However, this phrase implies that local communities are actively involved and valued as equal partners. This euphemism softens the power relations between tourism actors and local communities, and masks the potential for marginalization or exploitation that may occur.

Overall, the use of euphemism in sustainability discourse shows that language does not only function as a means of communication, but also as an ideological mechanism that shapes public consciousness. In the context of critical ecolinguistics, euphemism can be seen as a form of masking the true ecological and social impacts, while maintaining a positive and ethical image. This strategy strengthens the dominance of ecological discourse that is compatible with green capitalism and distances the discourse from structural criticism of the roots of ecological problems.

V. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Analysis of linguistic units in sustainability discourse—taken from the official websites of several hotels in Bali that practice ecotourism and commercial ecology—reveals that language has a strategic function in shaping public perceptions of environmental issues. The use of conceptual metaphors such as "eco-conscious," "green," and "permaculture" shows that language is not only a communication tool, but also a normative and persuasive means of building an ecological image. In line with Stibbe's (2015) view, language shapes an ecological worldview that can direct the way we think and act toward the environment. In this context, euphemism

functions as a discourse mechanism to normalize or disguise practices that actually still operate within the framework of exploitative capitalism.

Theoretically, these findings strengthen the significance of a critical ecolinguistic approach in dismantling ideological constructions in the language of sustainability. Ecolinguistics provides a framework for exploring how environmental representations are not neutral, but are loaded with power relations that work through lexical choices and metaphors. This study broadens the understanding that linguistic strategies such as euphemisms play an important role in the reproduction of the ideology of green capitalism, and can be used as a tool to critique discursive practices that disguise ecological and social inequalities.

Meanwhile, practically, the results of this study serve as a basis for tourism industry players, policy makers, and consumers to be more critical of language representations in ecotourism promotions. Discursive transparency is needed in the use of the term sustainability so as not to get caught up in greenwashing or false ecological imaging. In addition, strengthening ecolinguistic literacy for the community and business actors can be an initial step to encourage more substantial, participatory, and ecologically just sustainability practices.

Further research could expand the study of the relationship between language and ecology to other industrial sectors that also utilize sustainability narratives as part of their communication strategies, such as: (1) the sustainable fashion industry – to explore how terms such as eco-friendly fabrics, slow fashion, or ethical production are used discursively to shape brand images and normalize consumption practices in the textile industry that is fraught with ecological problems; (2) the organic food and farming industry – to examine the use of metaphors or euphemisms such as farm-to-table, clean eating, or natural ingredients in framing the sustainability of food consumption; and (3) the energy and infrastructure industry – such as the use of the terms renewable, carbon offset, or net zero in energy company campaigns claiming a transition to a green economy.

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