



REVIEW ARTICLE

Section: *Literature, Linguistics & Criticism*

Constructing human–nature relations in Qur’anic and Biblical Discourse: A comparative ecolinguistic analysis

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ABSTRACT

The degradation of the environment has led scholars to investigate more the ways in which language covers human – nature relations. Ecolinguistics has achieved valuable methods for the identification of ecological narratives, but the methods are at present scattered and of little comparative studies between Islamic and Christian environmental texts are few. This study aims to fill those gaps by applying Integrated Ecological Religious Evaluative Model (IEREM), which is a synthesis of the following theories, in analysing Qur’anic and Biblical passages: Ecological Discourse Analysis (Stibbe, 2015, 2021), Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999), and Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005). The study reveals how ecological connotations can be found in the texts by means of grammatical representation, conceptual metaphors, evaluative language and ecological narratives by way of a qualitative analysis of twelve texts purposefully selected (Qur’an 45:13, 16:14, 14:32, 78:6–7, 6:38, 3:190; Genesis 1:28–30, 2:15, Psalm 19:1, 24:1, 104, Romans 8:19–22). The results suggest significant commonality between the two scriptures on nature as a component of a divinely orchestrated system and man as morally responsible stewards and not owners of nature. Against this backdrop, however, it is possible to demonstrate that the discourse in the Qur’an is oriented more toward God’s actions (agency) and the created order itself as āyāt (signs), while, in the Biblical texts, there is a greater emphasis on delegated stewardship and care of the creation. The study not only provides an analytical approach that can be applied to other, comparison-oriented, ecolinguistic research, but also highlights the potential of religious discourse for environmental ethics and environmental communication for sustainability.

KEYWORDS: ecolinguistics, human–nature relations, qur’anic discourse, biblical discourse, IEREM, comparative discourse analysis, stewardship, systemic functional linguistics, conceptual metaphor theory, appraisal theory

Research Journal in Advanced Humanities

Volume 7, Issue 4, 2026

ISSN: 2708-5945 (Print)

ISSN: 2708-5953 (Online)

ARTICLE HISTORY

Submitted: 28 June 2026

Accepted: 23 August 2026

Published: 06 October 2026

HOW TO CITE

Al-Aameri, B. F. K., & Al-Hilu, M. J. (2026). Constructing human–nature relations in Qur’anic and Biblical discourse: A comparative ecolinguistic analysis. *Research Journal in Advanced Humanities*, 7(4). <https://doi.org/10.58256/09203m84>

Published in Nairobi, Kenya by Royallite Global, an imprint of Royallite Publishers Limited

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1. Introduction

With the accelerating ecological crisis, it has now become one of the most urgent challenges that the world faces in the twenty first century. The relations between human societies and the nature have been significantly changed by climate change, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, environmental pollution and the unsustainable exploitation of the nature. While these challenges are often analyzed on the scientific, technological, economic and political levels, there are also growing voices in the literature that problematize the role of ecology as molded by how language produces, legitimates and normalizes certain conceptions of nature and the human's place in it (Halliday, 1990; Stibbe, 2015, 2021). From this point, philosophers, politicians, and other communicators with public responsibilities can recognize that environmental issues are also language-based issues because the ways people speak, value and think about the more than human world are directly related to the communicative approaches and the linguistic options they select in their daily lives, in public discourse, and in the media and educational systems. Thus, the question of how the environment is linguistically framed became a main focus point of today's ecolinguistics.

Ecolinguistics has turned itself into a flourishing interdisciplinary area that looks at the reciprocal relationships among language, culture and ecological systems. Haugen's (1972) first proposal of the ecology of language, which investigated the relationship between language and the sociocultural setting of language, essentially marked a tradition of linguistics which has expanded to include many other areas. Discourses are not governmentally innocuous, Halliday (1990) contended, but may instead confirm assumptions which are environmentally injurious, especially those that focus on unlimited economic expansion, consumerism and that man dominates nature. Picking up this systemic-functional view, Stibbe (2015, 2021) has put forward an influential notion of 'the stories we live by'—recurring patterns of language that represent cultural stories and drive ecological beliefs, values, and behaviour. Language is key to understanding ecological catastrophe and ecological sustainability in these narratives that shape understandings of identity, agency, responsibility and the relationships between humans and other living beings within societies.

In this tradition of theory, discourse can be thought of, not merely as a representational surface of reality, but as a social practice which is influential in the production of knowledge, values, and social relations (Fairclough, 1995). From the perspective of language, the effects of the technologies used, and choices about agency, evaluation, metaphor, and categorization can shape nature's representation to either an independent partner in ecological relationships or as a passive material ready for human consumption or as a community of living beings that has an intrinsic value. As such, research focused on ecolinguistics aims to expose the ecological underpinnings of language and to provide an indication as to whether the assumptions in language encourage environmentally positive, benign or harmful worldviews (Stibbe, 2021). Various types of discursive analysis have been used to explore discourses in political rhetoric, in environmental campaigns, in media communications, as well as in educational materials and corporate communication/engagement, and such analyses have revealed that language is highly involved with ecological consciousness (Alexander & Stibbe, 2014; Stibbe, 2021). Yet, relatively little work has been done on sacred texts, which continue to shape the ethical approach and attitudes towards the environment.

A special area for ecolinguistic research concerns religious discourse, as billions of people around the world are still inspired by its moral imagination as revealed in the scriptures. From a cultural perspective, the Qur'an and the Bible are powerful texts which shape the ideas of justice, responsibility, stewardship and human interactions with creation. Yesterday, the author had an opportunity to have a wonderful conversation with John Hay of ISLE, a group affiliated with the Faith Community Nursing Network (FCNN) in the UK. Yesterday, the author was able to have a great discussion with John Hay of ISLE, which is a registered group under the Faith Community Nursing Network (FCNN) in the United Kingdom. Yet there is also a variety of interpretations of these texts that at times can be contradictory about what the status of humans is in the natural world.

In Biblical scholarship, discussions about the concept of creation within the nature of human beings in Genesis 1:26–28 have focussed either on a legitimised anthropocentric exploitation of nature, or on an assumed responsibility for stewardship of nature under the authority of God (White, 1967; Horrell et al., 2010). In a similar vein, Islamic scholarship has studied the eco-friendly applications of such notions as *khalīfah* (vicegerency), *amānah* (trust), *mīzān* (balance) and *fasād* (corruption) in the Qur'an, which view environmental responsibility as part and parcel of moral accountability before God (Foltz et al., 2003; Izzi Dien, 2000; Nasr,

1996). As seen in these discussions, ecological ethics are not only located in theological doctrines but also in the linguistic structures with which the sacred text creates relationships between God, man and Nature. As a result, a discourse analysis of this kind can be a useful means to gain insights into the representation of these relationships, as well as what these relationships can give towards a wider eco-worldview.

Although there is a trend toward convergence of the concepts of ‘ecolinguistics’ and ‘environmental humanities’, there are two gaps in the literature. First, most of the literature in the field of religion and ecology has been theological, philosophical, or ethical in nature with only a limited interest in the ways in which the eco-logical meaning is crafted linguistically. Previous research on the topic of human–nature relations has been conducted on such issues as stewardship, dominion, creation care or environmental ethics, but few have systematically discussed how all aspects of the grammar, conceptual metaphors, evaluative resource and discourse patterns contribute to the representation of human–nature relations. Second, comparative studies which examine the Qur’an and the Bible are mostly concerned with the similarities and differences in content, excluding an analysis of the linguistic manifestation of ecology meaning. To date, however, there is little research on the interplay of discourse, cognition and evaluation in the process of worldviewing in relation to ecology in sacred texts.

The present study takes an integrated approach and views the gaps from an integrated approach using integrated ecolinguistic theoretical tools namely: Ecological Discourse Analysis (Stibbe, 2021), Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999), and Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005), and this is integrated under a framework called Integrated Ecological Religious Evaluative Model (IEREM). Instead of using these frameworks separately, IEREM brings these frameworks together into a complementary analytical model that can analyse ecological meaning on a number of levels of discourse. It explores specifically how the linguistic representation, the conceptual structures, the evaluative patterns and the ecological narrative are combined together in creating human–nature relations in religious discourse. This is in response to new demands in ecolinguistics for theoretically plural and methodologically coherent, multidimensional models of ecological meaning that go beyond the current uniform means of CFL.

This article outlines the first inevitable fruit of a broader comparative study of ecological discourse in the Qur’an and the Bible and centres on how human–environmental relationship is being built up, specifically. Based on a strategically chosen and translated collection of Qur’anic and Biblical texts, the research highlights the ways in which each scripture linguistically depicts the interaction of humanity and natural environment and what kind of message/ecology might emerge from the larger context of each passage. The analysis reveals that both scriptures encourage human responsibility to the earth in ecologically benefitting ways in their main statements, but both have different ways of expressing stewardship, agency and ecological responsibility in their language. This research brings together many linguistic angles in an analytical model that not only aids the ongoing study of ecolinguistics, but also promotes comparative research of religious discourse and provides a replicable model for discerning ecological meaning in sacred texts.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Ecolinguistics and Ecological Discourse Analysis

Ecolinguistics has developed into a vibrant interdisciplinary study, focused on the interrelatedness between language, ecology and the socio-cultural processes involved in the production of environmental realities. The field has developed since its emergence in the early 1970s from only being a matter of concern about the ecological contexts of language use to a study that investigates the effects of discourse on human perceptions and interactions with their surroundings nature. This is in line with an expanding awareness of environmental crises not being only computationally biophysical, but also linguistically mediated - that is, they are shaped and changeable according to how they are linguistically framed, interpreted and acted upon (Haugen, 1972; Stibbe, 2021).

Often, the beginnings of the Intellectual foundations of ecolinguistics can be found in Haugen’s (1972) fundamental idea on the ecology of language as viewed in the context of the relationship between language and its social environment. Haugen stressed that languages are part of an ecology of speakers, communities and cultural context, and that they therefore have an ecological interdependence. While largely centring on the issue

of language maintenance, multilingualism and linguistic diversity, this perspective also set a precedent for an ecological perspective which was expanded by later researchers to the analysis of discourse and environment sustainability (Fill & Penz, 2018). Thus, present day ecology of language needs to have an ecological approach to ideas expressed in language.

An important milestone in the evolution of ecolinguistics was Halliday's (1990) well received contention that language itself can be a factor in ecological degradation in normalizing certain ideological assumptions. Dominant discourses often naturalize and legitimate behaviours that are environmentally devastating, such as unlimited economic growth, consumerism and anthropocentric views of progress, Halliday argued. But instead of a language that is a place of description of reality, Halliday showed that the grammar and lexicon of language is active in producing social values and norms of behaviours. His systemic functional approach highlighted the ecological conditions that the language represents, assesses and re-creates by considering language as a social semiotic resource. This insight provided an impetus to the development of ecological discourse analysis, the aim of which is to look for the patterns in language that either reproduce or contest ideologies that have an impact on the environment.

Stibbe takes up Halliday's work and proposes a new conceptualisation of ecolinguistics: The concept of the stories we live by (2015, 2021) focuses on how discourse reflects culturally shared narratives and therefore helps to shape relationships with the more-than-human. These are not the only stories that are told textually, but are also broader cognitive and ideological patterns expressed in ways of framing, metaphoricizing, evaluating, constructing identities, creating salience, convincing and representing agency made by use of language, according to Stibbe (2021). These frames of discourse influence perceptions of environmental responsibility, generate moral limits and boundaries, and provide justification for specific types of 'environmental' engagement. Therefore, ecolinguistic analysis is not only directed towards the linguistic structure description, but also to the question about the possibility of ecological sustainability description within the frame of the discourse or to the maintenance of destructive environment paradigms.

That an explicit ecological philosophy (ecosophy) is included is a special feature of Stibbe's framework for appraising discourse in relation to its potential ecological consequences (Stibbe, 2021). But, instead of making the assumption that all environmental talk is good language, ecolinguistic analysis evaluates whether specific linguistic structures promote ecologically desirable, ecologically ambiguous or even ecologically harmful relations between humans and the environment. The evaluative orientation can be seen as a difference from the previous speech analysis method in ecolinguistics that combines the speech analysis in the descriptive part of the topic with the ethical analysis of the environment's sustainability. It also offers a framework for an examination of the systematic development of values towards stewardship and exploitation, responsibility and ecology interdependence in texts.

Now with the development of ecolinguistics, it can be seen that integration with cognitive linguistics arises, critical discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, multimodal discourse analysis as well as environmental humanities further broadens the scope of analysis in ecological language. All these interdisciplinary advancements demonstrate the rejection of studying ecological meanings merely in light of single language features and the need to identify these meanings as negotiated between grammatical, conceptual and evaluative resources, and wider sociocultural discourses (Chen, 2023; Stibbe, 2021). Thus, recent works on ecolinguistics tend to practice integrated analysis approaches that are able to consider the multiple aspects of meaning in discourse, ranging from the grammatical aspect of its representation to the ideological construction of the discourse.

However, so far, the available research on ecolinguistics has mainly been related to environmental communication in political communication, reporting in the media, advertisements, education and sustainability stories of companies (Alexander & Stibbe, 2014; Poole, 2022). Although religious discourses remain critical to the environmental values and ethical practices of billions of people around the globe, comparatively little study has been done on sacred texts. Furthermore, those studies which do study religious discourse, often focus on religious/onological and/or philosophical aspects of language instead of systematic linguistic approaches. Consequently, not much is known about the interplay of the different ways of constructing ecological meanings in both grammar and conceptual metaphor and the relationship between language and evaluative communication in sacred texts. This gap needs to be filled with an analytical framework which links complementary linguistic approaches making it able to deal with the multi-dimensionality of ecological discourse.

2.2 Human–Nature Relations in Religious Discourse

The theme of human–nature relations is central for several environmental humanities, religious studies and ecolinguistics with its implications concerning the moral legitimate of the natural world and human beings' moral obligations towards it. Not only science knowledge creates environmental worldviews; also other discourses which shape the relationship between humans and other modes of life, such as cultural, philosophical and religious ones have an impact on creating an environmental worldview (Stibbe, 2021). In the context of faiths, religious texts frame fundamental stories that do or do not support the ideas of creation, stewardship, dominion, justice, and accountability—the concepts that shaped believers' ideas and their actions on the environment (Foltz, Denny, & Baharuddin, 2003; Horrell, Hunt, Southgate, & Stavrakopoulou, 2010).

After White's (1967) influential claim that some readings of the Judeo-Christian tradition led to the emergence of anthropocentric attitudes towards nature, scholarly research on the topic of religion and ecology became international. But what White argued is that the Biblical idea of the dominion of humans over the earth has historically allowed the extraction of natural resources; and humans have been placed above the creation as a consequence. Despite much debate about his thesis, it sparked a large amount of interdisciplinary research into the ecological implications of religious worldviews and was an impetus to reassess the environmental ethics that are inherent within sacred texts (Horrell et al., 2010).

Later scholarship has questioned interpretations that speak of the right to unrestricted exploitation as equivalent with dominion. Lots of biblical commentators have claimed that rather than human authority over nature, dominion in this biblical passage refers to delegated authority – stewardship – under God (Bauckham, 2010; Horrell et al., 2010). With this in mind, the Bible can be seen as giving a consistent picture of this created world as having value in itself as something which came into being through God and is something that God cares about. Thus humans are portrayed as stewards given the important responsibilities of maintaining creation's integrity, productivity and thriving — and not necessarily using creation for unlimited economic or material gain (Bauckham, 2010; Horrell et al., 2010).

Similar ecological themes in Islamic thought revolve around the themes of *khalīfah* (vicegerency), *amānah* (trust), *mīzān* (balance), and *fasād* (corruption) in the Qur'an, with all of them suggesting that a harmonious relationship with nature is a prerequisite requirement for all who have been appointed as *khalīfah*. Similar ecological themes in Islamic thought are found in similar concepts in the Qur'an, in the notions of *khalīfah* (vicegerency), *amānah* (trust), *mīzān* (balance) and *fasād* (corruption) all of which point to the need of living in harmony with nature as a prerequisite condition for those who have been appointed as *khalīfah*. Together, these ideas give the universal primary concern of the human person on their stewardship of the divinely ordained order, or rhythm, of creation, and their obligation to be morally responsible for their activities that disturb the harmony in the ecosystems (Foltz et al., 2003; Izzi Dien, 2000; Nasr, 1996). Instead of seeing nature as a passive object over which humanity is to assert itself and that sheds no light on God, in the Qur'ān it is described repeatedly as a community of signs (*āyāt*) that reveal God's wisdom, God's messages to humanity, which are to be acknowledged, celebrated and meditated upon (Nasr, 1996).

Previous studies about Qur'ān and Bible have been mostly theological, ethical and philosophical notwithstanding the above mentioned ecological motifs. Academics have discussed how scripture bases environmental stewardship, how religions react to climate change as well as how religion act approach sustainability (Foltz et al., 2003; Horrell et al., 2010; Tucker & Grim, 2017). Although these studies have in many ways added to the growing understanding of religious environmental ethics, they have mainly engaged with the interpretation of the content of religious texts rather than the processes of language that are utilized to construct ecological meanings. As a result, the role of grammatical features, conceptual metaphors, evaluative vocabulary and discourse patterns to representations of human–nature relations in sacred writing remain largely unexplored.

It is important from an ecolinguistic point of view that this is not a limit because of the possibility that ecological meaning may be expressed in other places besides as a theological statement. Instead, they are formed by patterns of representation that give agency, build identities, judgements about action and order human and non-human relationships and the divine (Halliday, 1994; Martin & White, 2005; Stibbe, 2021). For instance, portraying nature as a playing an active role in creation does not signal the same worldview of nature as would be inferred from its portrayal as an object of human use. Consequently, there is a fundamental difference in the

character of ecological language that foregrounds notions of accountability, reciprocity, and interdependence, such language, and the more dominant or unrestricted control-based overtones that are associated with that of the extractive model. This analysis of these linguistic aspects thus illuminates a more complete picture of the nature of environmental ethics as presented in the sacred texts than can theology alone.

Additionally, most of the comparative studies between the Qur'an and Bible have focussed on comparing similarities and dissimilarities in theological teachings and not in a systematic comparison of their discourse pattern. While these studies give valuable information on topics like stewardship, creation and environmental responsibility, few touch upon the question of the linguistic implementation and realization of such concepts, based on grammatical, metaphoric, evaluating and narrative-structuring components. This is highly significant, since subtle variations in the norming of ecological responsibility, agency and the human-natural relations might be uncovered through a discourse analysis of various religious beliefs.

2.3 An Integrated Framework for Analysing Ecological Meaning

As indicated by the growing intricate nature of ecological discourse, there is a need for analytical frameworks that can work with linguistic meaning, at various levels of discourse. Ecological discourses are also manifested in grammar, conceptual structuration, evaluation and location as well as in the overall ideology. So single-language analysis of the ecological meaning is not likely to reflect the multidimensional possibilities of constructing the relations between human and natural environments through discourse (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Martin & White, 2005; Stibbe, 2021). Although each theory sheds light in its own way, they have tended to highlight but a single piece of the puzzle of ecological meaning, this again requiring a more holistic approach at analysing discourses.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) views language as a social semiotic system which simultaneously creates experience, interpersonal relationships and text organisation. Specific interest for ecolinguistic research lies in the transitivity system (MSP), which looks at the ways that discourse represents processes, participants and circumstances. By analysing transitivity, it is possible to examine the agency residing in an author, divine forces, and natural features to uncover any suggestions of responsibility, authority and ecological involvement, and it is the latter that has been underappreciated in the subject of climate change discourse analysis (Goatly, 2000; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). But SFL only partially addresses aspects of conceptualization and evaluation that underlie the interpretation of ecological meaning.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) provides a theory of understanding which can be used to complement grammatical work by explaining how abstract concepts of the environment are understood by the systematic mapping from a familiar domain and a less familiar one (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999). Conceptual metaphors are not merely rhetorical devices that are used to decorate texts but impact on the way in which individuals view complex ecological relationships and are, in turn, the basis for patterns of reasoning. Metaphorical imagery, like the environment as a divine trust, creation as a sign or humans as stewards, offer frames of thought that enable environmental responsibility to be thought through and understood. Despite this, there is relatively little interest in CMT in interpersonal evaluation, and in the grammatical organisation of discourse.

A further dimension of ecological meaning is given by Appraisal Theory, which is an extension of Systemic Functional Linguistics (Martin & White, 2005) looking at the linguistic resources used to voice attitudes, negotiate positions and make evaluations of people, actions and phenomena. An analysis of Attitude, Engagement and Graduation appraisal systems allows for research into the ways in which discourse reproduces and legitimises ecological values, as well as the ways it appraises the behaviour of the environment, and positions readers towards certain moral views. In the context of religion, appraisal resources are closely all-important, as the religious writings often operate as moral authorisation in which people's God-given ethical duties and their actions are morally assessed, via both manifest and implicit means, in the light of these obligations and nature. Appraisal Theory, however, has offered a complicated theory of how evaluative meaning is created but has not explicitly concerned itself with broader ecological ideologies, or the cultural stories these values are carried by. The broader (ideological) aspects are captured by Ecological Discourse Analysis, for instance in the work of the stories we live by (Stibbe, 2015, 2021). Stibbe believes discourse represents culturally shared story patterns which: Create patterns of human relations with the more-than-human world; Include framing, evaluation,

identity, conviction, salience, erasure and metaphor. A comparison with other discourse analysis approaches, which focus solely on the linguistic structure, Ecological Discourse Analysis aims to assess the ecological impact a discourse has on the basis of the questions whether it contributes to ecologically viable, ambivalent or harmful ways of perceiving the natural world. This evaluative approach gives the grammar, syntax and cognitive and interpersonal meanings a general “ecological” setting to which judgments can be made.

These each give valuable analytical insights but are not individually adequate when it comes to explaining the construction of ecological meanings in sacred language. Systemic Functional Linguistics focuses on the association of ecological experience on the grammatical plane, Conceptual Metaphor Theory on the cognitive plane of organising ecological concepts, Appraisal Theory on evaluating and negotiating ecological values and Ecological Discourse Analysis on the practical significance of these linguistic patterns in an ecological perspective. Hence, their analytical powers are who complementary and not competitive.

This study utilizes the Integrated Ecological Religious Evaluative Model (IEREM) as its theoretical model, seeing its complementarity given this scenario. Based on this synthesis of complementary traditions IEREM is a multi-dimensional analytical model which allows an ecological meaning to be examined at four interwoven and interdependent levels: (1) grammar of representation, (2) conceptual field of representation, (3) evaluative positioning, and (4) ecological narration. The model does not aim to prioritise one level of analysis over the other, but to look at the interplay between the dimensions to contribute to the formation of representations of human–nature relations in religious discourse. This integration implies an appreciation of the fact that in the nature of ecological meaning, linguistics is not the sole source of ecological significance, but that the importance of ecological meaning can be thought of as the product of a series of grammatical as well as cognitive, interpersonal and ideological resources that can be found across the boundaries of discourse.

2.4 Research Gap and Theoretical Contribution

The first part of this review showcases that progress and development in the fields of ecolinguistics, environmental humanities and the study of religious discourse have been achieved. This has been synthesized in contemporary ecolinguistics, where language is revealed to be an integral part in the construction of ecological worldviews, reflected in how humans think, value and practice the ecology of the natural environment (Halliday, 1990; Stibbe, 2015, 2021). Similarly, research into the fields of religion and ecology has revealed that the Qur’an and the Bible have a rich heritage of teaching about creation and the stewardship, justice, accountability and ethical obligations of people towards their environment (Foltz et al., 2003; Horrell et al., 2010; Tucker & Grim, 2017). As a group these studies contribute to an enhanced body of knowledge regarding the relationships between language, religion and environmental ethics.

However, a few important drawbacks still exist: Firstly, the literature which exists on the “Environmental Ethics” in “The Qur’an” and “The Bible” has done so either from a theological, philosophical or ethics perspective. Less attention has been given to the study of some linguistic means of building ecological meanings in the field of sacred discourse. This, in turn, makes understanding how these elements of grammatical representations, conceptual metaphors, evaluative language and discourse organisation can interact to create human–nature relations a not fully explored research field (Martin & White, 2005; Stibbe, 2021).

Second, in spite of the increasing interdisciplinary approaches of ecolinguistic research, most of the research projects still use single analytical framework in isolation. Studies on metaphors based on Systemic Functional Linguistics have either tended to focus on the representational patterns of the grammar or on the processing of Agency in terms of metaphor (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), while those involving Conceptual Metaphor Theory have mostly examined the cognitive organization of the environmental concepts (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999). On the other hand, Appraisal Theory has been largely used to research evaluative meanings and positioning within inter-personal discourse (Martin & White, 2005), and also in the field of Ecological Discourse Analysis to search for ecological discourses and to evaluate if they fit with ecosophia or not (Stibbe, 2015, 2021). While valuable research has emerged from each of these stances, few analyses have combined these complementary approaches into a new analytic tool that can view ecological “meaning” from a range of discourses.

Another is that related to comp”rati’e work with sacred text. Previous studies have been done with the Qur’an and the Bible are more polarized on the level of theological doctrines or environment ethics and have

not carried out a systematic analysis of the construction of ecological meanings linguistically. Thus, there is still little awareness of the agency given, the notion of “stewardship,” the environment’s assessment and evaluation of behaviour, and finally, how environments are narrated through language in each scripture. Solutions to these problems can only be achieved with an analytical system that encompasses in a single system grammar, cognitive, interpersonal and ecological aspects.

The aim of the present study is to fill these gaps by proposing and implementing the Integrated Ecological Religious Evaluative Model (IEREM) which is a multidimensional model and paradigm to explain comparative level of ecological discourse in the Qur’an and the Bible. IEREM is unique in that it combines and integrates the concepts of Systemic Functional Linguistics with Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Appraisal Theory and Ecological Discourse Analysis to allow the investigation of ecological meanings at all four levels: grammatical meaning, conceptual metaphor, evaluative position and ecological narrative. This holistic perspective gives more complex view into the management of human – nature relationship in sacred discourse, and also enriches the methodological approach of the current era of ecolinguistics.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

In the context of human–nature relationships, this study follows a qualitative comparative discourse analyst research design in investigating the linguistic construction of human–nature in Qur’an and Bible. The study aimed to interpret how ecological meanings are constructed through linguistic choices, which happened to be the reason why the qualitative research design is particularly appropriate (Creswell & Poth, 2018), and the researcher’s face-to-face interaction with the participants. In particular, the study focuses on four elements (grammatical representation, conceptual metaphor, evaluative language and ecological narratives) and the interplay between these elements in the construction of environmental worldviews in sacred speech. The use of a systematic, functional and interpretive approach to language will help provide an understanding of the tacit encoding of ecological values within two significant religious writings.

Unlike most search engines, the comparative aspect of the research is in its core. This study does not look at the Qur’an and the Bible separately and it does not analyse the language of each of them; it is rather a comparison of the linguistic resources through which each scripture represents human–nature relations. Comparative discourse analysis helps to reveal the similarities and differences in ecological representation without homogenizing the theologically and linguistically unique aspects of each discourse, as does Fairclough (1995). This kind of comparison is especially useful for uncovering the similarities among the ecological stories and stories generally, as well as aspects of agency, stewardship, accountability and evaluation for nature that are peculiar to each scripture.

3.2 Corpus and Data Sources

The resources used in this study comprise selected passages, from the Qur’ān and the Bible, rendering the human–nature relations in these passages explicitly and implicitly. The texts for the corpus were created using purposive sampling based on the following ecological themes which were important to the objective of the study: creation, stewardship, vicegerency, dominion, ecological balance, accountability and human responsibility for the natural environment. Purposive sampling was used to select passages which yielded rich linguistic data that would be used to explore the ecological meaning in religious discourse rather than seeking statistical representativeness (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015).

The Qur’anic data were the ones used in Abdullah Yusuf Ali’s (2006) English translation of the Qur’an and the Biblical data were taken from the New International Version (NIV, 2011). The choice of these translations was based on their availability for a wide international audience, and on their widespread use in academic research. The practice of translation into English also serves as a basic framework for comparing translations and analyzing discourse from a theological perspective, while recognizing the limitations of the interpretations that are possible only in the original texts (Arabic and Hebrew/Greek). The analysis is thus oriented towards the linguistic manifestation of ecological contents in the chosen English version(s) instead of issues of textual criticism or textual translation equivalence.

Table 1: Overview of the Research Corpus

Corpus	Source	Translation	Theme
Qur'anic Passages	Abdullah Yusuf Ali (20016)	English	Human–Nature Relations
Q1	Qur'an 45:13	“He has subjected to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth”	Taskhīr (subjection)
Q2	Qur'an 16:14	“He subjected the sea for you to eat from it tender meat and to extract ornaments”	Taskhīr (subjection)
Q3	Qur'an 14:32	“He subjected for you the ships to sail through the sea and subjected for you the rivers”	Taskhīr (subjection)
Q4	Qur'an 78:6–7	“Have We not made the earth a resting place? And the mountains as stakes?”	Earth as supportive environment
Q5	Qur'an 6:38	“There is not an animal on the earth nor a bird that flies but (forms part of) communities like you”	Ummah (communities)
Q6	Qur'an 3:190	“In the creation of the heavens and the earth... there are indeed signs (āyāt) for men of understanding”	Āyāt (signs)
Biblical Passages	New International Version (2011)	English	Human–Nature Relations
B1	Genesis 1:28–30	“Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish... birds... every living creature”	Dominion and Stewardship
B2	Genesis 2:15	“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it”	Stewardship and Care
B3	Psalms 19:1	“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands”	Nature as Testimony
B4	Psalms 24:1	“The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it”	Divine Ownership
B5	Psalms 104	“He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for people to cultivate... How many are your works, Lord!”	Creation as Living Community
B6	Romans 8:19–22	“The creation waits in eager expectation... the whole creation has been groaning”	Creation's Suffering and Hope

3.3 The Integrated Ecological Religious Evaluative Model (IEREM)

This study uses Integrated Ecological Religious Evaluative Model (IEREM) as an analytical model that has been developed to examine the multi dimensionality of constructing the ecological meaning in religious discourse. The model was created when the need was recognized that single-theory approaches were insufficient, because they often focused on only a single aspect of discourse, such as evaluating the functional representation of grammar, on choosing certain concepts over others, or on the intensity of evaluative discourse, to name just a few. IEREM combines complementary strands of the linguistic traditions and offers a fully fledged analytical framework that can be used to analyse the ways in which ecological meanings are created out of a range of discourse resources.

IEREM integrates four different theoretical approaches: Ecological Discourse Analysis (Stibbe, 2015, 2021), Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999) and Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005). These “perspectives” are not

considered as stand-alone analytical tools, but rather as overlapping aspects of a holistic analytical framework. The underlying 'ecological' philosophy that guides an evaluation of the ecological discourses is realized in an 'ecological' Discourse Analysis and the distribution of agency and grammatical representation is discussed within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics. The conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) uncovers the cognitive structures for understanding environmental concepts while Appraisal Theory uncovers the resources which are used to appraise and thus shape moral stances with regards to environmental actions.

Figure 1: The Integrated Ecological Religious Evaluative Model (IEREM)

3.4 Analytical Procedures

Analysis was done using systematic and multi-stage procedure by Integrated Ecological Religious Evaluative Model (IEREM). This was done to provide some analytical consistency for interpreting both the Qur'anic and Biblical corpus, as well as to whittle away the linguistically and discursively unrelated elements from each text. Instead of dissecting single linguistic components, the procedure focused on the interplay between the grammatical representation, the conceptual framing, the evaluation of positions and the ecological narratives and was used to give a full picture of the construction of human–nature relations in the religious discourse.

First stage was the close reading of the selected Qur'anic and Biblical passages where texts were found that explicitly and/or implicitly talked about relationship between humans and the natural environment. In this stage each passage has been analysed in its immediate context of the text to make sure that semantic coherence is maintained and no interpretations are made based on the extraction of individual lexical elements. Those of the selected passages that refer to human–nature relations were then grouped together; the passages therein that covered Theme 1: Human–Nature Relations are the ones stressed in the present article.

In the second phase each of the chosen passages was analysed in terms of the transitivity system of SFL (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). This analysis addressed the distribution of processes, participants, the subjects involved, and circumstances, the context, to find out who got the agency – humans, gods or elements of the natural environment. Specially, aspects of environmental actors, grammatical forms of stewardship and responsibility and linguistic construction of interactions between human and non-human were put into focus.

The third stage was aimed at the Identification of conceptual metaphors from an ecological viewpoint. Applying Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999), patterns were identified that frequently emerged as metaphors to structure the representations of creation, stewardship, accountability, and ecological responsibility. In an effort to reveal the conceptual mappings that organised understanding of the environment, across the selected passages, rather than individual metaphorical expressions, it was decided to look at a selection of broader conceptual mappings.

At the fourth stage evaluated language was investigated in line with the Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005). In this stage, the works of the selected text that were reflective of the systems of Attitude, Engagement and Graduation, which represented attitude, evaluation of environmental behaviour, interpersonal positioning of author, and intensification or mitigation ways of ecological meaning were analysed. Special focus was on evaluative aids that built positive or negative positions on environmental responsibility and people's

approaches to nature were given.

The fifth and last stage was named Integrated, which put the results of the previous analysis together in terms of Ecological Discourse Analysis (Stibbe, 2015, 2021). At this point the grammatical, cognitive and evaluative insights were explored together to draw out the larger ecological stories in each scripture by which human–nature relations were developed. These narratives were then assessed based on their ecological turn in order to identify those that instilled ecologically beneficial, ambivalent, or environmentally destructive views toward the human–more-than-human relationship.

4. Findings

4.1 Analysis of Qur’anic Texts

4.1.1 Qur’an 45:13 – Divine Subjection and Human Beneficiary Status

Text: “*And He has subjected to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth – all from Him.*” (Qur’an 45:13)

Stage 1: Grammatical Representation (SFL)

Productivity, which constitutes the material process in the clause has three Participants: God as the Actor, nature as the Goal and human beings as the Beneficiary. Creation is a relational process that is identified in the second clause, with Carrier being creation and with “from Him” as the Attribute, marking a point of divinity. The verse is the expression of an ideology of theocentrism in which there are no ethical restrictions on man’s activities.

Table 2: Stage 2: Conceptual Framing (CMT)

Metaphorical Expression	Source Domain	Target Domain	Conceptual Metaphor
“He has subjected”	MASTER/OWNER	DIVINE AUTHORITY	NATURE AS DIVINE GIFT
“all from Him”	GIVER/SOURCE	DIVINE ORIGIN	NATURE AS DIVINE GIFT

Table 3: Stage 3: Evaluative Analysis (Appraisal)

Feature	Evidence	Analysis
Affect	None	No emotional language
Judgement	None	No evaluation of human behaviour
Appreciation	Implicit positive	Nature as a gift
Engagement	Monoglossic	Authoritative declarative
Graduation	None	No intensification

Stage 4: Ecological Narrative (EDA)

Nature is figured as a resource to be enjoyed by humans. God is the only Agent and nature is passive, man is a beneficiary but has not been mentioned for an explicit role. The story is judged to be Ambivalent (Score: +1).

4.1.2 Qur’an 16:14 – The Sea as Resource for Human Consumption

Text: “*And it is He who subjected the sea for you to eat from it tender meat and to extract from it ornaments which you wear.*” (Qur’an 16:14)

Stage 1: Grammatical Representation (SFL)

Three material processes, God gives up the sea, eating, extracting. Humans are secondary Actors of extraction with Sea being Goal and God being Actor. The verse contains theocentric utilitarianism, in which there are nested human agency but no limits on extraction.

Table 4: Stage 2: Conceptual Framing (CMT)

Metaphorical Expression	Source Domain	Target Domain	Conceptual Metaphor
“subjected the sea”	MASTER/OWNER	DIVINE AUTHORITY	NATURE AS DIVINE GIFT
“to eat... tender meat”	CONSUMER	HUMAN USE	NATURE AS RESOURCE
“to extract ornaments”	MINER/EXTRACTOR	HUMAN USE	NATURE AS RESOURCE

Table 5: Stage 3: Evaluative Analysis (Appraisal)

Feature	Evidence	Analysis
Appreciation	Implicit positive	“tender meat” (desirability); “ornaments” (beauty)
Engagement	Monoglossic	Authoritative declarative
Graduation	None	No intensification

Stage 4: Ecological Narrative (EDA)

The passage confines the sea to provide food to them and raw materials for their food. Nature has an instrumental value. Limits/Responsibilities not mentioned. Ambivalent (Neutral) (Score: 0).

4.1.3 Qur’an 14:32 – Ships and Rivers as Divine Provision

Text: “*And He subjected for you the ships to sail through the sea by His command and subjected for you the rivers.*” (Qur’an 14:32)

Stage 1: Grammatical Representation (SFL)

Material processes: God processes ships, rivers, ships, as Actors, move by God’s commands. Theocentric with delegated agency - Ships act by the will of God and man is a passive onlooker and beneficiary.

Table 6: Stage 2: Conceptual Framing (CMT)

Metaphorical Expression	Source Domain	Target Domain	Conceptual Metaphor
“subjected... the ships”	MASTER/OWNER	DIVINE AUTHORITY	NATURE AS DIVINE GIFT
“ships to sail”	VEHICLE/TOOL	HUMAN TRANSPORTATION	NATURE AS TOOL
“by His command”	COMMANDER	DIVINE CONTROL	NATURE AS DIVINE GIFT

Table 7: Stage 3: Evaluative Analysis (Appraisal)

Feature	Evidence	Analysis
Appreciation	None	Neutral valuation
Engagement	Monoglossic	Authoritative declarative

Stage 4: Ecological Narrative (EDA)

Vessels and rivers are used for man to be moved on, at God’s command. The nature is portrayed as a means for use by humans. Ambivalent (Neutral) (Score: 0).

4.1.4 Qur’an 78:6–7 – Earth as Resting Place

Text: “*Have We not made the earth a resting place? And the mountains as stakes?*” (Qur’an 78:6–7)

Stage 1: Grammatical Representation (SFL)

Relational processes: God (implied Actor) makes the earth a resting place and mountains as stakes. Theocentric design concept; God sculpted the earth for the benefit of humanity; earth’s proper working deleted; nature’s own agency erased.

Table 8: Stage 2: Conceptual Framing (CMT)

Metaphorical Expression	Source Domain	Target Domain	Conceptual Metaphor
“made the earth a resting place”	HOME/CRADLE	EARTH AS HABITATION	EARTH AS HOME
“mountains as stakes”	TENT PEGS/ANCHORS	MOUNTAINS AS STABILIZERS	EARTH AS HOME

Table 9: Stage 3: Evaluative Analysis (Appraisal)

Feature	Evidence	Analysis
Appreciation	Implicit positive	“resting place” (comfort, safety); “stakes” (stability)
Engagement	Monoglossic (rhetorical)	Authoritative question

Stage 4: Ecological Narrative (EDA)

The world earth that is, our earth is Habitable, Stable, Safe. Stabilising by mountain; security. Am.split/Classified as Ambivalent (Positive Tendency) (Score: +1).

4.1.5 Qur'an 6:38 – Animals as Communities

Text: “*There is not an animal on the earth, nor a bird that flies with its wings, but (forms part of) communities like you.*” (Qur'an 6:38)

Stage 1: Grammatical Representation (SFL)

Existential process with animals and birds as Existent (animal expressed by animals & birds) and Relational process (Carrier animals & birds, Attribute “communities like you”. Ecocentric perspective; animals do have intrinsic value; No God; Humanity is at the animal's service; human agency over animals erased.

Table 10: Stage 2: Conceptual Framing (CMT)

Metaphorical Expression	Source Domain	Target Domain	Conceptual Metaphor
“communities like you”	FAMILY/KINSHIP	ANIMALS AS EQUALS	ANIMALS AS KINSHIP COMMUNITIES

Table 11: Stage 3: Evaluative Analysis (Appraisal)

Feature	Evidence	Analysis
Appreciation	Explicit positive	“communities like you” – animals have social structure and intrinsic worth
Engagement	Monoglossic	Authoritative declarative

Stage 4: Ecological Narrative (EDA)

The ontological parity of animals to humans is that they are communities. Very good eco-alignments with ecosophy (intrinsic value, interconnectedness). This is considered Beneficial (Score: +2).

4.1.6 Qur'an 3:190 – Nature as Signs for Reflection

Text: “*Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs (āyāt) for men of understanding.*” (Qur'an 3:190)

Stage 1: Grammatical Representation (SFL)

Existential process with signs (āyāt) as Existent; nature as Location; humans as Beneficiary (men of understanding). Epistemological orientation, nature as source of wisdom, God neither as Actor, nor human action on nature.

Table 12: Stage 2: Conceptual Framing (CMT)

Metaphorical Expression	Source Domain	Target Domain	Conceptual Metaphor
“there are signs (āyāt)”	BOOK/TEXT/SIGN	NATURE AS REVELATION	NATURE AS TEXT
“for men of understanding”	READER/INTERPRETER	HUMAN AS SEEKER	NATURE AS TEXT

Table 13: Stage 3: Evaluative Analysis (Appraisal)

Feature	Evidence	Analysis
Affect	Implicit (wonder)	“Behold!” calls for attention and awe
Judgement	Implicit positive	“men of understanding” – those who reflect are wise
Appreciation	Explicit positive	“signs (āyāt)” – nature is meaningful, revelatory, valuable
Graduation	Force	“indeed” (la-) intensifies certainty

Stage 4: Ecological Narrative (EDA)

Nature is a semiotic text containing signs revealing divine wisdom. Humans are interpreters and seekers. Classified as Beneficial (Score: +2).

4.2 Analysis of Biblical Texts

4.2.1 Genesis 1:28–30 – Dominion and Stewardship

Text: “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’ Then God said, ‘I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.’” (Genesis 1:28–30)

Stage 1: Grammatical Representation (SFL)

God is Actor in blessing and giving; humans are Actors in ruling and subduing. Theocentric with delegated human agency; humans have authority over creation but within divine framework; nature as Goal of human action.

Table 14: Stage 2: Conceptual Framing (CMT)

Metaphorical Expression	Source Domain	Target Domain	Conceptual Metaphor
“subdue it”	CONQUEROR/RULER	HUMAN AUTHORITY	NATURE AS DOMINION
“rule over”	KING/RULER	HUMAN GOVERNANCE	NATURE AS DOMINION
“I give you”	GIVER	DIVINE PROVISION	NATURE AS DIVINE GIFT

Table 15: Stage 3: Evaluative Analysis (Appraisal)

Feature	Evidence	Analysis
Judgement	Implicit	Authority given; responsibility implied
Appreciation	Positive	Creation valued as God’s provision
Engagement	Monoglossic	Divine command

Stage 4: Ecological Narrative (EDA)

Humans have authority over creation but within divine framework. Classified as Ambivalent (Score: +1).

4.2.2 Genesis 2:15 – Stewardship and Care

Text: “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” (Genesis 2:15)

Stage 1: Grammatical Representation (SFL)

Material processes: God as Actor (took, put); humans as Actor (work, take care). Theocentric with delegated human stewardship; nature as Goal of human care.

Table 16: Stage 2: Conceptual Framing (CMT)

Metaphorical Expression	Source Domain	Target Domain	Conceptual Metaphor
“to work it”	CULTIVATOR/GARDENER	HUMAN CARE	CREATION AS GARDEN
“take care of it”	PROTECTOR/GUARDIAN	HUMAN CARE	CREATION AS GARDEN
“Garden of Eden”	SACRED SPACE	CREATION	CREATION AS GARDEN

Table 17: Stage 3: Evaluative Analysis (Appraisal)

Feature	Evidence	Analysis
Judgement	Positive	“work” and “take care” imply responsible behaviour
Appreciation	Positive	Garden valued as sacred space
Engagement	Monoglossic	Historical narrative

Stage 4: Ecological Narrative (EDA)

Humans are gardeners and guardians of creation. Classified as Beneficial (Score: +2).

4.2.3 Psalm 19:1 – Nature as Testimony

Text: “*The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.*” (Psalm 19:1)

Stage 1: Grammatical Representation (SFL)

Mental/verbal processes: Heavens as Actor/Senser (declare); skies as Actor (proclaim). Creation has active communicative agency; nature participates in praising God.

Table 18: Stage 2: Conceptual Framing (CMT)

Metaphorical Expression	Source Domain	Target Domain	Conceptual Metaphor
“declare the glory”	SPEAKER/WITNESS	NATURE’S COMMUNICATION	CREATION AS TESTIMONY
“proclaim the work”	HERALD/MESSENGER	NATURE’S COMMUNICATION	CREATION AS TESTIMONY

Table 19: Stage 3: Evaluative Analysis (Appraisal)

Feature	Evidence	Analysis
Appreciation	Positive	Nature valued as revealing divine glory
Engagement	Monoglossic	Poetic declaration

Stage 4: Ecological Narrative (EDA)

Creation is a witness to divine glory. Nature has active communicative agency. Classified as Beneficial (Score: +2).

4.2.4 Psalm 24:1 – Divine Ownership

Text: “*The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.*” (Psalm 24:1)

Stage 1: Grammatical Representation (SFL)

Relational process: Earth as Carrier, the Lord as Possessor. Theocentric ownership; humans and nature are co-carriers of dependency; both belong to God.

Table 20: Stage 2: Conceptual Framing (CMT)

Metaphorical Expression	Source Domain	Target Domain	Conceptual Metaphor
“the earth is the Lord’s”	OWNER/PROPERTY	DIVINE OWNERSHIP	EARTH AS DIVINE PROPERTY
“all who live in it”	TENANT/RESIDENT	HUMAN POSITION	HUMANITY AS TENANT

Table 21: Stage 3: Evaluative Analysis (Appraisal)

Feature	Evidence	Analysis
Appreciation	Positive	Creation valued because it belongs to God
Engagement	Monoglossic	Authoritative declaration
Graduation	Force	Cumulative list-building intensifies scope

Stage 4: Ecological Narrative (EDA)

God owns everything; humans are tenants. Classified as Beneficial (Score: +2).

4.2.5 Psalm 104 – Creation as Living Community

Text: “*He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for people to cultivate... How many are your works, Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures... When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground.*” (Psalm 104:14, 24, 30)

Stage 1: Grammatical Representation (SFL)

Material processes: God as Actor (makes grow, sends, renews); creation as Goal and Actor (cattle, plants, creatures). Theocentric with active creation; nature participates in divine order.

Table 22: Stage 2: Conceptual Framing (CMT)

Metaphorical Expression	Source Domain	Target Domain	Conceptual Metaphor
“earth is full of your creatures”	HOUSEHOLD/COMMUNITY	BIODIVERSITY	CREATION AS LIVING COMMUNITY
“renew the face of the ground”	RENEWAL/REFRESHMENT	ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION	CREATION AS LIVING COMMUNITY

Table 23: Stage 3: Evaluative Analysis (Appraisal)

Feature	Evidence	Analysis
Appreciation	Positive	Biodiversity praised
Affect	Awe	“How many are your works, Lord!”

Stage 4: Ecological Narrative (EDA)

Creation is a living community of interdependent creatures. Classified as Beneficial (Score: +2).

4.2.6 Romans 8:19–22 – Creation’s Groaning and Hope

Text: “*For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.*” (Romans 8:19–22)

Stage 1: Grammatical Representation (SFL)

Mental/behavioural processes: Creation as Senser (waits, groans); Material processes: Creation as Goal (subjected, liberated). Nature is personified with agency, emotion, and hope; creation as innocent victim of human moral failure.

Table 24: Stage 2: Conceptual Framing (CMT)

Metaphorical Expression	Source Domain	Target Domain	Conceptual Metaphor
“waits in eager expectation”	PERSON WITH HOPE	CREATION’S AGENCY	CREATION AS PERSON
“bondage to decay”	SLAVERY	ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION	DEGRADATION AS BONDAGE
“groaning as in childbirth”	CHILDBIRTH PAIN	CREATION’S SUFFERING	SUFFERING AS CHILDBIRTH

Table 25: Stage 3: Evaluative Analysis (Appraisal)

Feature	Evidence	Analysis
Appreciation	Negative/Positive	“bondage to decay” (negative); “liberation” (positive)
Affect	Empathy	“groaning” evokes compassion
Engagement	Heteroglossic	“We know...” builds solidarity

Stage 4: Ecological Narrative (EDA)

Creation suffers and hopes for restoration. Classified as Beneficial (Score: +2).

4.3 Comparative Synthesis**Table 26: Comparative Summary of IEREM Analysis**

Analytical Dimension	Qur’anic Discourse	Biblical Discourse	Shared Principle
Grammatical Representation	God as primary Actor; humans as Beneficiaries or secondary Actors; nature as Goal	God as Actor; humans as delegated Actors; nature as Goal or active participant	Divine authority governs human responsibility

Conceptual Metaphors	NATURE AS GIFT, RESOURCE, TOOL, HOME, KINSHIP, TEXT	NATURE AS DOMINION, GARDEN, TESTIMONY, PROPERTY, COMMUNITY, PERSON	Nature possesses theological significance
Evaluative Positioning	Implicit/positive appreciation; monoglossic; high certainty	Positive appreciation; monoglossic; heteroglossic in Romans	Positive evaluation of ecological responsibility
Ecological Narratives	Stewardship, balance (<i>mīzān</i>), accountability	Stewardship, creation care, covenant	Human–nature relations are morally regulated

Key Findings

1. **Convergence:** Both scriptures envision a nature that exists within a divinely ordained system and humans as stewards, morally accountable.
2. **Qur’anic Distinctiveness:** increased focus on the notion of divine agency and of nature as āyāt (signs) to which one should reflect.
3. **Biblical Distinctiveness:** Enfocarse more in delegated human stewardship, creation care.
4. **Dominant Narrative:** The overall dominant attitude of both scriptures to human–nature relationships is eco-beneficial.

5. Discussion

Based on the outcomes of this research, it can be stated that the Integrated Ecological Religious Evaluative Model (IEREM) is able to give the comprehensive view concerning the condition of human – nature relation and the language of the Qur’an and Bible in analysing it. The integrated analysis shows ways in which rather than only single language functions, ecological meanings are created through the interplay of grammatical representation, conceptual metaphors, evaluative language and broader ecological narratives.

5.1 Theoretical Implications

The study contributes to the understanding of the theory of ecolinguistics by proving that the ecological meanings in sacred discourse are multidimensional. In both the Qur’an and the Bible human–nature relations are conceived as morally determined relations that are underpinned by divine authority and human accountability. This discovery dispels such simplistic readings of both scriptures, as solely anthropocentric or solely ecocentric. Rather, data expose intricate narratives of discursiveness, which handle both human privilege as well as ecological responsibility.

The comparative analysis also contributes to the existing knowledge of the religious environmental discourse. Theological issues like stewardship and vicegerency have been given significant attention in previous linguistic studies but the present study illustrates how the concepts of these theological ideas are linguistically implemented in patterns of agency, metaphor, evaluation and narrative. This language-based approach is important and is a complement to theology-based approach, which provides a glimpse into how ecological values are coded and expressed via the discursive process and mechanisms.

5.2 Methodological Implications

The study proves methodologically the usefulness of integrative analytical approaches in doing ecolinguistic research. While each of the four, underpinning theories: Systemic Functional Linguistics, Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Appraisal Theory and Ecological Discourse Analysis, offers a valuable insight, none one of them manages to give a comprehensive description of ecological meaning. The concept that they are integrated in IEREM allows for analysing the interaction between the different grammatical choices, conceptual structures, evaluative resources and ecological narratives to build an environmental worldview.

The book also provides an analytical method that can be used with other forms of religious discourse as well as political, educational and media discourse and which can be adapted more widely. The four stage process (grammatical analysis, conceptual metaphor analysis, evaluative analysis and synthesis of the ecological narrative) offers an underpinning for a systematic investigation of the construction of ecological meanings in a range of discursive contexts.

5.3 Practical Implications

The results have implications for the fields of environmental communication and sustainability education. The four ecological stories (stewardship, accountability, interconnectedness, and care for creation) found in the above study have the potential of culturally rich resources for promoting environmental responsibility in the context of faith-based communities. These are narratives that can be used to depict sustainability in a manner that is attractive to religious audiences, and useful for environmental groups or teachers.

Also, there is comparative convergence of Islamic and Christian ecological discourse with a potential for interfaith cooperation over environmental concerns. But common ground based on shared values of stewardship, accountability and respect for creation, can be an unifying basis for collective efforts to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental justice.

6. Conclusion

In this study, an ecologic approach (model Integrated Ecological Religious Evaluative Model (IEREM)) was used in the process of analyzing the linguistic implementation of the relation between humans and nature in the Qur'an and the Bible. Combining Systemic Functional Linguistics, Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Appraisal Theory and Ecological Discourse Analysis, the study explored ways of how ecological meanings are realised at various levels through grammatical representation, conceptual framing, evaluative positioning, and broader ecological narratives. The comparative analysis revealed that the two scriptures formulate an ecological worldview that does constantly envision a restricted authority of human beings, legitimated by a divine authority, moral responsibility, and answerability toward nature.

The results show that there are common points as shown in the ecological orientation of both the Qur'an and the Bible which is based on stewardship, environmental responsibility and the inherent value of the creation in which it is manifested in the different strategies of language use. In general, the Qur'anic discourse emphasizes much more than the Biblical discourse the role of Divine agency; and the Biblical discourse emphasizes delegated human stewardship more than the Qur'anic discourse emphasizes that human stewardship is a manifestation of God's wisdom and continuous providence within a natural world. These differences in how the narratives are linguistically realized do not preclude the view that both corpora present ecological narratives that question reductive notions of anthropocentrism, thus presenting human beings as morally accountable participants within a divinely ordered ecological system.

In addition to its empirical results the study may contribute to present-day conceptions in ecolinguistics in both theoretical and methodological aspects. It is theoretically important as it shows that environmental ethics in sacred texts are not necessarily only expressed through forthright theological teachings but rather are systematic in their manifestation of a pattern of grammatical choice, conceptual metaphor, evaluative language and ecological storytelling. Theoretically, the research is descriptive that brings and operationalizes the Integrated Ecological Religious Evaluative Model (IEREM) as the whole framework in analysing ecological discourse. The results indicate a greater complexity and contextuality of ecological meaning than the findings of studies that take a one-sided approach to a linguistic theory.

However, some caveats should be noted. The research is limited to the purposely-selection of a corpus pertaining to Theme 1: Human–Nature Relations, and thus does not cover the entire cosmos of all the ecological themes addressed in both scriptures. In addition, the study relies on English translations of the Qur'an and the Bible, as these translations while being widely used in academic studies are not always complete, and thus fail to include all the semantic and stylistic aspects of the original Arabic-Hebrew/Greek texts. The application of IEREM to other ecological themes, larger user multilingual corpora or other religious and cultural traditions, to be studied as part of future investigations, could further test the analytical range of the framework and its applicability in other fields of interdisciplinary research.

The present work shows that ecological meanings in sacred texts can only be identified when several aspects of language are combined, and do not exist in isolation based on any lexical or theological aspect. Through the critical analysis of how the Qur'an and the Bible have contextualised human–nature relationships in coherent, integrated patterns of representation, conceptualisation, evaluation, and ecological narrative, it contributes to comparative ecolinguistics and religious discourse analysis as well as providing a powerful analytical tool which could be applied to future research in environmental communication.

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