Kemanusiaan Vol. 33, No. 2 (2026), 93–109

Ecolinguistic Framing of Raja Ampat's Environmental Degradation

*KHUSNUL KHOTIMAH[1]
ARIEF SETYAWAN[1]
MULYONO[2]

[1]Universitas Trunodjoyo Madura, Jalan Raya Telang, P.O. Box 2, Kamal District, Bangkalan Regency, Madura, East Java 69162, Indonesia

[2]Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Lidah Wetan, Lidah Wetan, Lakarsantri District, Surabaya City, East Java 60213, Indonesia

***Corresponding author:** khusnul.khotimah@trunojoyo.ac.id

Published online: 30 October 2026

To cite this article: Khusnul Khotimah, Arief Setyawan and Mulyono 2026. Ecolinguistic framing of Raja Ampat's environmental degradation. *KEMANUSIAAN the Asian Journal of Humanities* 33(2): 93–109. https://doi.org/10.21315/kajh2026.33.3.5

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.21315/kajh2026.33.3.5

Abstract. Environmental degradation in ecologically significant regions often becomes not only an environmental crisis but also a discursive struggle over meaning, responsibility and legitimacy. This study investigated how environmental degradation in Raja Ampat, Indonesia, one of the world's most biodiverse marine ecosystems, was linguistically framed in Indonesian online news media. Drawing on an integrated framework of ecolinguistics and critical discourse analysis, the study examined 36 news articles published between year 2024 and 2025 from major Indonesian media outlets. The analysis identified three dominant discourse frames that structured media representations of the mining controversy: the environmental catastrophe frame, the economic justification frame and the conflict of authority frame. Each frame employed distinct linguistic strategies, including evaluative metaphors, technocratic nominalisations and modal constructions, which reflected competing ideological positions among environmental groups, government institutions, corporations and local communities. The findings revealed that media discourse functioned as a discursive arena where ecological values, economic development narratives and institutional authority were negotiated and contested. By uncovering the linguistic mechanisms through which environmental realities are constructed, this study contributes to the growing field of ecolinguistics and extends research on environmental communication in the Global South. The study highlights the importance of more transparent, inclusive and ecologically responsible media discourse in shaping public understanding and environmental governance in biodiversity-rich regions such as Raja Ampat.

Keywords and phrases: ecolinguistics, environmental discourse, critical discourse analysis, Raja Ampat, ecological narratives

© Penerbit Universiti Sains Malaysia, 2026. This work is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Introduction

In recent decades, the world has experienced a sharp rise in environmental degradation, which is fuelled by industrialisation, extractive economies and unsustainable development practices (Quito et al. 2022). Forests are cleared, oceans are polluted and biodiversity is subjected to extreme threats, often in the name of progress. This ecological crisis on the planet is not only a biophysical phenomenon; it is closely interwoven with sociopolitical structures and, crucially, with language. The way environmental issues are communicated, what is emphasised, omitted, framed, or justified shapes public perception, policy decisions and collective action (Erbaugh et al. 2024). In this regard, language is one of the primary instruments of ecological awareness or ecological ignorance. Though environmental degradation has increasingly become a global concern, the ways in which such crises are communicated often vary across national and local contexts. While global discussions emphasise climate change, biodiversity loss and sustainability transitions, local environmental conflicts frequently emerge from specific political, economic and cultural dynamics. Indonesia represents a particularly important case because environmental debates are often intertwined with resource extraction, development policies and competing stakeholder interests. Understanding how these local ecological controversies are linguistically constructed in the media is therefore essential for revealing how environmental realities are interpreted and legitimised in public discourse.

A growing body of scholarship has emphasised the need to approach environmental discourse in a critical way. Ecolinguistics, as Stibbe (2015) explains, is the study of the stories we live by: the narratives embedded in linguistic practice that underlie how we relate to nature, in ways that are destructive or sustainable. In this framework, ecolinguistics is a strong interdisciplinary approach that combines linguistics, ecology and critical theory (Davari and Ghorbanpour 2024). It investigates the role of language in the construction, reproduction and resistance of discourses that affect the health of the planet. The most prevalent claim within the field is that language is never neutral, reflects and supports specific ontological viewpoints while silencing others. In the Indonesian context, ecological destruction is often intertwined with political and economic interests, especially in areas with natural resources (Abdurrahim et al. 2025). Raja Ampat, located in the province of West Papua, is internationally recognised due to its unique marine biodiversity and ecological value. However, in recent years, the region has come under intense public scrutiny due to nickel mining projects, which have been accused of causing severe environmental damage. National media has extensively reported the controversies surrounding these mining activities, generating a wide range of narratives, some condemning the destruction, others justifying the economic

development and still others sowing doubt or denial. These conflicting narratives are instruments of ideological struggle, emphasising the role of media.

In the ecological crisis in Raja Ampat, media discourse plays a vital role in shaping how the public sees it, whether as an urgent environmental emergency, a political dispute, or a technical matter of permits and regulations. Yet, despite the importance of this discursive terrain, few academic studies (e.g., Jabeen 2024; Arifudin, Wahyuni and Trisakti-Haryadi 2020) have systematically examined how Indonesian media linguistically frame environmental degradation, particularly through the lens of ecolinguistics. In general, most studies have focused on major issues such as deforestation, forest fires, climate change and environmental policy. Sahide et al. (2020) explored how environmental policy was influenced by political interests and how forest governance was shaped by elite actors. They found that communication about forests in Indonesia was often controlled by government and corporate narratives. Rochyadi-Reetz (2022) also studied climate change reporting in Indonesian newspapers and found that journalists often repeated government positions and used scientific language that was difficult for the public to understand. These studies showed that environmental discourse in Indonesia was often top-down and technical, which could limit public awareness and engagement. Khotimah et al. (2021) and Khotimah, Laksono and Suhartono (2022) conducted studies on ecological discourse and ecolinguistics focusing on Indonesian mass media and demonstrated that media language played a role in framing specific ideologies. This supported that mass media employed various linguistic devices to package both constructive and destructive environmental ideologies, such as euphemisms and dysphemisms.

Prior studies aimed to examine the potential ecological impacts of infodemics, whether constructive or destructive for readers, indicating that texts influence readers' thought patterns and attitudes. Misinformation, particularly misleading advice deliberately created without accuracy and often tied to emotional or conspiratorial narratives, exacerbated these effects. The findings suggest that media framing can influence attitudes and thought patterns in ways that ultimately harm the environment. Other studies have used critical discourse analysis to examine how power and ideology are present in environmental texts. For example, Cadman, MacDonald and Soomai (2020) examined how environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs) used language to challenge government policies. They showed that language could serve as a tool for resistance, but also that alternative voices were often pushed to the margins. Meanwhile, Jindřichovská and Eckert (2021) used critical discourse analysis to examine how major mining companies framed sustainability during the COVID-19 crisis. They found that corporate reports used vague and positive

language to conceal environmental harm, presenting destructive practices as responsible management. By highlighting financial success and social support, companies reframed their image while masking ecological damage. Together, these studies suggested how critical discourse analysis could reveal hidden ideologies and power behind corporate environmental narratives.

However, the use of ecolinguistics in Indonesian environmental studies is still very limited. Ecolinguistics is a field that connects language with ecological thinking. It examines how language shapes our views of nature and the environment. One important concept in ecolinguistics is metaphor. For example, if nature is described as a "resource", people may feel it is something to be used. But if nature is described as a "mother", people may feel it should be protected. Another concept is framing. Framing involves how the same event can be presented in different ways depending on word choices, focus and tone. In short, ecolinguistics also looks at how language evaluates actions (e.g., calling something "destructive" or "necessary") and how stories (narratives) influence our understanding of the environment (Stibbe 2015). Few studies have applied ecolinguistic tools to examine media representation of environmental issues. An interesting example is the study by Sadiq, Alam and Rehman (2025), which undertook an ecolinguistic investigation of the environmental discourse in Pakistani print and digital media. Their conclusions reveal that political and economic interests often influence media narratives, which tend to undermine ecological sustainability. By analysing language patterns, metaphors and framing techniques in reports about climate change, deforestation, water shortage and pollution, the study highlighted the dominance of anthropocentric perspectives and advocated the need to replace such discourse with a more ecocentric and sustainability-focused discourse. This research contributes to the growing field of ecolinguistics and offers practical recommendations for environmentally responsible communication in media and policymaking contexts.

Ecolinguistics has grown in other countries, but it is still relatively new in Indonesia. A growing body of scholarship on environmental communication in Indonesia has examined how environmental conflicts are linguistically framed through the lens of ecolinguistics. They largely focus on policy debates, climate reporting and governance dynamics but rarely explore the ideological structures embedded in media language itself. In particular, the case of Raja Ampat, a globally significant biodiversity hotspot currently facing mining-related controversies, remains underexplored from an ecolinguistic perspective. This gap is significant because the language used in media coverage can shape public perceptions of environmental harm, development priorities and Indigenous ecological values. The present study, therefore, aimed to bridge this research gap through a critical ecolinguistic analysis of how the Indonesian news media

reports on environmental destruction caused by mining in Raja Ampat. The main question that guided the research of this article was the following: How is environmental degradation in Raja Ampat linguistically represented in Indonesian online news media? Through analysis of the vocabulary, phrases and structures employed in newspaper coverage, this study examines how the press frames people's perception of the problem. It also delves into the subtexts, morals and beliefs behind how these tales are recounted.

Through the study analysis, this study hopes to show how language can influence public opinion, support or challenge certain interests and affect how people think about nature. The goal is to raise awareness of the power of language to promote or harm ecological values. By examining how Indonesian online media frame environmental degradation in Raja Ampat, this study contributes to both ecolinguistics and environmental discourse studies in several ways:

1. It provides empirical evidence of how linguistic framing structures competing ecological narratives in Indonesian media.

2. It demonstrates how ecolinguistic analysis can uncover ideological tensions between economic development discourse and ecological protection.

3. It expands the geographical scope of ecolinguistic research by focusing on Southeast Asia, a region where extractive development and biodiversity conservation frequently intersect.

Methodology

The present study adopted a qualitative research design employing critical discourse analysis integrated with an ecolinguistic perspective. The primary dataset consisted of 36 online news articles published between June 2024 and July 2025, purposively selected from major Indonesian news outlets including *Kompas*, *Tempo*, *CNBC Indonesia*, *Mongabay*, *Detik*, *Liputan6*, *Green Network* and *Bisnis.com*. These media outlets were selected because they represented a diverse range of journalistic orientations within the Indonesian media landscape. They included mainstream national newspapers (e.g., *Kompas* and *Tempo*), business-oriented media (e.g., *CNBC Indonesia* and *Bisnis.com*), environmental journalism platforms (e.g., *Mongabay* and *Green Network*) and widely accessed online news portals (e.g., *Detik* and *Liputan6*). This diversity enabled the study to capture variations in discursive framing across different institutional and ideological positions.

These articles were chosen because they explicitly discussed environmental degradation or mining activities in Raja Ampat and contained statements from relevant stakeholders such as government officials, environmental organisations, scientists and local communities. Each article was archived and organised into a corpus using NVivo 12 to facilitate coding, retrieval and cross-referencing. Metadata such as publication date, headline, media outlet and main themes were catalogued for contextual reference. To ensure triangulation, the sources included a mix of mainstream, alternative and government-affiliated media, allowing for comparative analysis of discursive patterns and framing strategies.

The analytical process combined elements from critical discourse analysis, particularly as conceptualised by Fairclough (1995) and Van Dijk (1998), with ecolinguistic theory as developed by Stibbe (2015). The analysis was conducted in three main stages. First, a macro-level analysis was carried out to identify dominant themes and general discursive strategies used across the corpus. This included mapping the presence of recurring framing devices based on Entman's (1993) four-part model:

1. Problem definition.
2. Causal interpretation.
3. Moral evaluation.
4. Treatment recommendation.

These were identified through close reading and annotation. Second, a micro-level analysis focused on linguistic choices such as metaphors, adjectives, nominalisations, evaluative statements and modality. This step involved detailed textual examination of headlines, leads, quotations and commentary, revealing how specific lexical and syntactic features contribute to the construction of particular environmental realities. Third, the empirical findings were interpreted in the light of the ecolinguistic paradigm developed by Stibbe, particularly his concept of "the stories we live by", which referred to recurrent narrative structures (e.g., hero, villain, victim, sacredness) that shape our worldview and ethical positioning toward nature. Using this interpretive lens, the study was capable of shedding light on the ecological consequences inherent in the discourse and whether the linguistic decisions taken served to legitimatise, obscure or mitigate against environmental degradation.

The identification of discourse frames was conducted through an iterative coding process. Initially, recurring themes and narrative patterns were identified through open coding. These preliminary categories were then refined using Entman's (1993) framing model, focusing on how each article defined

environmental problems, attributed causes, evaluated actors and proposed solutions. Through repeated comparison across the corpus, three dominant frames emerged that consistently structured media representations of the Raja Ampat environmental controversy. To enhance validity, all stages of analysis were conducted iteratively, with data revisited in light of emerging categories. Peer debriefing was also conducted with ecolinguistics and environmental communication scholars to ensure analytical consistency and theoretical rigour. All in all, the study methodology provides both breadth (through thematic mapping) and depth (through fine-grained linguistic analysis), making it well-suited for exploring the complex discursive ecology surrounding the Raja Ampat environmental controversy.

Results

The analysis revealed three dominant ecolinguistic frames used in the media narratives: (1) environmental catastrophe frame, (2) economic justification frame and (3) conflict of authority frame. Table 1 summarises the key features of each frame.

A study of ecolinguistic features of the news articles on environmental degradation in Raja Ampat revealed three major types of framing that the media applied in their portrayal of environmental degradation in Raja Ampat: (1) environmental catastrophe frame, (2) economic justification frame and (3) conflict of authority frame. Such frames were determined by the regularity of patterns in the use of lexical items, narrative construction and rhetoric of evaluation and representation of actors, each with its particular ideological and ecological implications.

The environmental catastrophe frame was the most prominent and emotionally charged among the three. It was primarily found in articles published by environmental media, independent news outlets and platforms that quoted religious figures or local communities. This frame portrayed the mining activity as a direct threat to the integrity of Raja Ampat's ecological and cultural landscape. Lexical items such as *mengerikan* (horrifying) (Arief 2025), *kerusakan total* (total destruction) (*CNBC Indonesia* 2025a), *tak bakal pulih* (irreversible damage) (Asnawi and Salman 2025) and "paradise lost" (*Kompas.com* 2025) were frequently used to emphasise the gravity and permanence of the ecological harm. Metaphors such as *mengoyak surga dunia* (tearing apart heaven on earth) (*Kompas.com* 2025) and *pembunuhan keanekaragaman hayati* (the killing of biodiversity) (*CNBC Indonesia* 2025a) amplified the emotional impact and moral urgency of the issue.

Table 1. Ecolinguistic frames and linguistic strategies in Indonesian media coverage of Raja Ampat

Discourse frame	Dominant actors	Key linguistic strategies	Discursive function	Illustrative example
Environmental catastrophe frame	Environmental NGOs, religious leaders, local communities, environmental activists	Emotive metaphors, dysphemistic expressions, evaluative adjectives, moral language	Constructs environmental degradation as an urgent ecological and moral crisis; mobilises public concern and moral outrage	*kerusakan total* (total destruction) (*Kompas.com* 2025); *mengoyak surga dunia* (tearing apart heaven on earth) (*Tempo.co* 2025a); *pembunuhan keanekaragaman hayati* (the killing of biodiversity) (*Kompas.id* 2025a)
Economic justification frame	Government officials, mining companies, pro-development commentators	Nominalisation, bureaucratic terminology, passive constructions, technocratic language	Normalises extractive activities as part of economic development and governance processes while minimising ecological harm	*proses eksplorasi mineral strategis* (strategic mineral exploration process) (Anggrainy 2025a); *kegiatan masih dalam tahap kajian dampak lingkungan* (the activity is still under environmental impact assessment) (*Bisnis.com* 2025)
Conflict of Authority Frame	Central government, local government officials, scientists, policy experts	Modal verbs, hedging expressions, contradictory claims, institutional references	Highlights institutional disagreement and uncertainty regarding environmental responsibility and policy action	*belum ada bukti kuat* (no strong evidence yet) (*Tempo.co* 2025b); *perlu investigasi lebih lanjut* (requires in-depth investigation) (*Kompas.com* 2025); *harus ditindak jika terbukti melanggar* (appropriate action should be taken if a violation is proven) (*Kompas.com* 2025)

Furthermore, actors in this frame were clearly delineated. The villain was typically the mining company or a faceless "investor", often associated with distant economic power. The victims included not only the natural environment but also local communities, indigenous traditions and even moral-religious values. Articles quoting figures like bishops, environmental NGOs and indigenous leaders often used religious and ethical language to elevate the ecological issue into a broader moral crisis. For instance, one headline from *Kompas.id* (2025b) quoted a Catholic bishop expressing outrage, emphasising that even spiritual leaders were driven to protest due to the scale of environmental destruction. This frame corresponds to what Stibbe (2015) would categorise as a "beneficial discourse", one that challenges ecologically destructive ideologies and seeks to restore harmony between humans and nature.

In contrast, the economic justification frame employed a markedly different discursive strategy. Found mostly in government-aligned outlets and statements from corporate sources, this frame presented the mining activities as a development necessity, highlighting economic benefits, legal procedures and regional growth. The language was characterised by formal, technocratic vocabulary such as *eksplorasi mineral strategis* (strategic mineral exploration) (Anggrainy 2025a), *proses perizinan* (licensing process) (*Tempo.co* 2025c) and *kesejahteraan masyarakat lokal* (local community welfare) (Nugraheny and Djumena 2025). The ecological damage, if acknowledged at all, was framed as minimal or "manageable", often softened by passive constructions such as *diduga terjadi kerusakan terbatas* (alleged limited damage) (Anggrainy 2025b) or *masih dalam kajian dampak lingkungan* (still under environmental impact assessment). In this frame, the hero was the mining operation itself, framed as a source of jobs and infrastructure. The villains, if any, were described as *aktor-aktor penghambat investasi* (investment obstacles) (Purnomo 2025), including activists or foreign NGOs. This narrative aligns with what Stibbe refers to as a "destructive discourse", one that supports ecologically harmful practices by embedding them in a language of progress, necessity and modernisation.

The third pattern, the conflict of authority frame, revealed institutional dissonance and inconsistent messaging across levels of government and civil society. Some articles highlighted sharp contradictions between central government officials who supported the mining project and local leaders or scientists who warned of its ecological consequences. This frame often employed modal verbs such as *harus ditindak* (must be sanctioned) (*Detik.com* 2025), *belum ada bukti kuat* (no strong evidence yet) (*Tempo.co* 2025d) and *perlu kajian mendalam* (requires in-depth assessment) (Muliawati 2025), reflecting the tentative and contested nature of the discourse. Nonetheless, this frame lacked a clear narrative structure, instead foregrounding ambiguity and uncertainty. It exposed how different state and non-state actors used competing language

strategies to assert authority, delay accountability, or shift blame. This mirrors what Hajer (1995) calls "discourse coalitions", where different institutional actors struggle to establish their version of environmental reality. A closer linguistic examination shows that this frame frequently relies on epistemic modality and hedging expressions that signal uncertainty and institutional hesitation. Phrases such as *belum ada bukti kuat* (no strong evidence yet) (*Tempo.co* 2025e), *diduga kuat terjadi pelanggaran* (strongly suspected violations) (*Detik News* 2025) and *perlu investigasi lebih lanjut* (further investigation is required) (Billiocta 2026) function discursively to delay definitive conclusions regarding environmental responsibility. Such linguistic strategies allow competing authorities to maintain legitimacy while avoiding direct accountability. The use of these modal constructions illustrates how environmental responsibility becomes discursively negotiated rather than clearly established.

Overall, the results suggested that media discourse on Raja Ampat's environmental crisis was not monolithic. Rather, it was a discursive battlefield where competing ecological ideologies are negotiated through language. The media, far from being a passive channel, actively participate in constructing public understanding, aligning audiences with particular environmental values or economic priorities depending on how the story is told.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrated the significant role that language plays in shaping public understanding of environmental crises, particularly in contested ecological spaces like Raja Ampat. Through the lens of ecolinguistics, the analysis revealed not only how environmental degradation was framed in Indonesian media but also how these frames reflected deeper ideological structures and power relations within society. To fully appreciate the implications of these findings, it was necessary to situate them within broader interdisciplinary discourses involving critical linguistics, environmental communication, political ecology and media studies.

One important contribution of this study is its demonstration of how ecolinguistic framing operates within the Indonesian media context, particularly in relation to extractive-industry conflicts. While previous studies have examined environmental governance and political economy in Indonesia, few have systematically analysed how linguistic choices shape environmental narratives in media reporting. By identifying recurring discourse frames and their linguistic features, this research shows how media language functions as a site where ecological values, development ideologies and institutional authority are negotiated.

From a linguistic perspective, the study confirms the potency of language as a carrier of ideology and environmental values. The environmental catastrophe frame, for instance, employed emotionally charged metaphors and evaluative language to construct a powerful narrative of loss, urgency and moral transgression. This is consistent with Stibbe's (2015) assertion that ecolinguistic analysis should uncover "stories we live by" that either support or undermine ecological well-being. The use of metaphors such as *surga yang dikoyak* (a paradise torn apart) (*CNBC Indonesia* 2025b) or *keanekaragaman hayati dibunuh* (biodiversity is being killed) (Mustika 2025) activated affective responses that influenced public empathy and mobilisation.

At the same time, the economic justification frame illustrated how language can be used to neutralise or obscure ecological harm. By utilising nominalisations, passive voice and technocratic jargon, common features in bureaucratic discourse (Fairclough 1995), this frame constructs mining as a rational, depersonalised activity governed by legal frameworks and economic necessity. This finding aligns with critical discourse analysis literature, which argues that such language strategies often serve to deagentify actions and suppress accountability (Van Dijk 1998).

Beyond the realm of linguistics, the analysis has strong resonance with the field of political ecology, which emphasises how environmental issues are shaped by unequal power relations, access to resources and institutional interests. The conflict of authority frame illustrated the struggles between various stakeholders, central government agencies, local governments, corporations, scientists and civil society to define what constitutes "environmental harm" and who gets to speak on behalf of the environment. This frame exposes the discursive hegemony at play, where some voices are amplified while others, particularly those of indigenous communities, are marginalised or tokenised. Political ecologists such as Robbins (2012) have long argued that environmental degradation is never simply a matter of poor management or scientific failure but a result of conflicting interests, contested knowledge systems and uneven power dynamics. In the case of Raja Ampat, the state's development discourse aligned with corporate extractivism, often overriding local ecological concerns. The findings of this study lend empirical support to such claims, showing how language is mobilised to legitimise resource extraction and delegitimise resistance.

Equally important is the contribution this study makes to environmental communication studies. Scholars in this field have examined how media representations of nature and environmental problems influence public understanding, policy support and behaviour (Schimberg 2024). The divergent

framings found in this study, ranging from moral outrage to technocratic justification, underscore the media's role as an active participant in shaping environmental narratives, rather than a passive conveyor of information. The presence of emotionally resonant language in advocacy-oriented outlets (e.g., *Mongabay*, *Kompas.id*) suggests an attempt to construct an environmental public sphere where ecological values can be contested, defended and communicated to broader audiences. However, the inconsistent and often contradictory messages in mainstream and government-affiliated media also highlight the fragmentation of environmental discourse in Indonesia. This fragmentation can lead to public confusion, reduced trust in institutions and weakened collective action, outcomes that are well documented in media ecology and public discourse research (Sahide et al. 2023; Fanani, Maisarah and Masrur 2025). Moreover, the occasional portrayal of environmental activism as obstructionist or politically motivated (as seen in the Economic Justification Frame) reflects a broader discursive strategy of delegitimisation, which serves to discredit ecological resistance and maintain the status quo.

In light of these observations, the study contributes to an emerging body of research that views environmental discourse not only as a reflection of reality but as a discursive terrain where ecological futures are imagined, negotiated and contested. This view is supported by the concept of "discourse coalitions" introduced by Hajer (1995), wherein actors from different institutional backgrounds converge around shared language and narratives to influence policy and public opinion. In Raja Ampat's case, discourse coalitions are visible in the alignment between government agencies and mining companies around the language of development, legality and national interest, while environmental NGOs and religious leaders coalesce around the language of morality, ecological sanctity and indigenous rights. Interestingly, the findings also raise questions about environmental epistemology, that is, who holds the authority to define what constitutes environmental harm.

The conflict of authority frame revealed a deeper tension between scientific expertise, traditional ecological knowledge and bureaucratic reasoning (Forsyth 2019). It is a theme that is often underexplored in ecolinguistic studies. Incorporating Indigenous knowledge systems into environmental discourse is critical, especially in places like Raja Ampat, where local communities have maintained sustainable ecological practices for generations. Finally, the study has pedagogical and policy implications. For educators, it underscores the importance of critical media literacy in environmental education, equipping students with the tools to deconstruct dominant narratives and recognise the ideological function of language. For policymakers and communicators, it highlights the need to develop ecologically honest and inclusive discourses that do not mask environmental harm behind euphemisms or economic imperatives.

In practical terms, promoting ecologically honest and inclusive discourse requires several changes in environmental communication practices. For journalists, this includes avoiding excessive reliance on technocratic jargon that obscures ecological consequences and ensuring that Indigenous and local community voices are represented as legitimate knowledge holders rather than symbolic actors. For policymakers, transparent language in environmental impact communication is crucial to prevent the normalisation of ecological damage through bureaucratic euphemisms. More balanced reporting that integrates scientific findings, local ecological knowledge and community perspectives can help foster a more informed and participatory environmental public sphere in Indonesia.

In summary, the interdisciplinary insights drawn from linguistics, political ecology, communication studies and media theory enrich our understanding of how environmental issues are framed in language. They reveal that the ecological crisis in Raja Ampat is not only a matter of deforestation or pollution, but also a discursive struggle over meaning, legitimacy and values. By exposing the linguistic mechanisms through which environmental realities are constructed, this study provides a foundation for reimagining more just and sustainable ecological narratives in Indonesia and beyond.

Conclusion

This study highlighted the power of language in mediating public understanding of environmental crises, specifically in the case of Raja Ampat's nickel mining controversy. Through ecolinguistic analysis, three dominant frames emerged:

1. Environmental catastrophe frame.
2. Economic justification frame.
3. Conflict of authority frame.

The findings contribute to ecolinguistic scholarship by showcasing how Indonesian news media simultaneously resist and reproduce ecological harm through framing, metaphor and evaluative language. For policymakers, educators and environmental advocates, understanding these linguistic patterns is essential for building more ecologically sustainable discourses. Future research could expand this analysis to include social media discourse or community oral narratives or compare state against independent media in shaping environmental awareness.

References

Abdurrahim, A.Y., Dharmawan, A.H., Adiwibowo, S. and Yogaswara, H. 2025. Actors, access, markets and values involved in oil palm expansion and peatland degradation in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. *Forest and Society* 9(1): 376–402. https://doi.org/10.24259/fs.v9i1.34533

Anggrainy, F.C. 2025a. Bahlil beberkan alasan izin tambang PT Gag Nikel di Raja Ampat tak dicabut. *Detik.com*, 10 June. Retrieved from https://news.detik.com/berita/d-7957014/bahlil-beberkan-alasan-izin-tambang-pt-gag-nikel-di-raja-ampat-tak-dicabut (accessed 27 September 2025).

Anggrainy, F.C. 2025b. Bahlil sebut gambar viral kerusakan Pulau Piaynemo Raja Ampat di medsos hoax. *Detik.com*, 10 June. Retrieved from https://news.detik.com/berita/d-7956867/bahlil-sebut-gambar-viral-kerusakan-pulau-piaynemo-raja-ampat-di-medsos-hoax (accessed 27 September 2025).

Arief, T.M.V. 2025. KKP usulkan revisi aturan izin pulau kecil usai kasus tambang nikel di Raja Ampat. *Kompas.com*, 11 June. Retrieved from https://money.kompas.com/read/2025/06/11/140840526/kkp-usulkan-revisi-aturan-izin-pulau-kecil-usai-kasus-tambang-nikel-di-raja (accessed 27 September 2025).

Arifudin, A., Wahyuni, H.I. and Trisakti-Haryadi, F. 2020. Haze disaster discourses in local Indonesian media: Examining Niklas Luhmann's perspective on ecological communication. *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review* 20(1): 17–30. https://doi.org/10.59588/2350-8329.1279

Asnawi, A. and Salman, R. 2025. Tambang nikel Raja Ampat, kerusakan tak bakal pulih. *Mongabay.co.id*, 8 June. Retrieved from https://mongabay.co.id/2025/06/08/tambang-nikel-raja-ampat-kerusakan-tak-bakal-pulih/ (accessed 20 September2025).

Billiocta, Y. 2026. Kronologi kapal wisata bawa 19 turis China kandas di Raja Ampat. *Liputan6.com*, 15 January. Retrieved from https://www.liputan6.com/regional/read/6258316/kronologi-kapal-wisata-bawa-19-turis-china-kandas-di-raja-ampat (accessed 27 September 2025).

Bisnis.com. 2025. Bocoran dari ESDM: KLH segera umumkan hasil kajian PT Gag Nikel Raja Ampat. 24 July. Retrieved from https://www.bisnis.com/topic/8272/raja-ampat (accessed 20 September 2025).

Cadman, R., MacDonald, B.H. and Soomai, S.S. 2020. Sharing victories: Characteristics of collaborative strategies of environmental non-governmental organizations in Canadian marine conservation. *Marine Policy* 115: 103862. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2020.103862

CNBC Indonesia. 2025a. Ini penampakan kerusakan alam akibat tambang nikel di Raja Ampat. 9 June. Retrieved from https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/news/20250609112855-8-639443/ini-penampakan-kerusakan-alam-akibat-tambang-nikel-di-raja-ampat (accessed 27 September 2025).

CNBC Indonesia. 2025b. Video: Tambang di tanah surga: Polemik nikel Raja Ampat. 11 June. Retrieved from https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/news/20250611130924-8-640014/video-tambang-di-tanah-surga-polemik-nikel-raja-ampat (accessed 27 September 2025).

Davari, H. and Ghorbanpour, A. 2024. Robert Poole: Corpus-assisted ecolinguistics. *Journal of World Languages* 10(2): 492–498. https://doi.org/10.1515/jwl-2024-0004

Detik.com. 2025. Legislator: Raja Ampat kekayaan yang berharga, tindak jika ada perusakan. 8 June. Retrieved from https://news.detik.com/berita/d-7954032/legislator-raja-ampat-kekayaan-yang-berharga-tindak-jika-ada-perusakan (accessed 26 September 2025).

Detik News. 2025. Komnas HAM sebut tambang nikel di Raja Ampat berpotensi langgar hak asasi. 13 June. Retrieved from https://news.detik.com/berita/d-7962900/komnas-ham-sebut-tambang-nikel-di-raja-ampat-berpotensi-langgar-hak-asasi (accessed 27 September 2025).

Entman, R.M. 1993. Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication* 43(4): 51–58. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x

Erbaugh, J.T., Chang, C.H., Masuda, Y.J. and Ribot, J. 2024. Communication and deliberation for environmental governance. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 49(1): 1–25. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-environ-112321-082450

Fairclough, N. 1995. *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Hampshire: Longman.

Fanani, A., Maisarah, M. and Masrur, M. 2025. Contextualizing artificial intelligence for English language learning in faith-based schools: A qualitative inquiry. *Multidisciplinary Science Journal* 8(6): 2026380. https://doi.org/10.31893/multiscience.2026380

Forsyth, T. 2019. Who shapes the politics of expertise? Co-production and authoritative knowledge in Thailand's political forests. *Antipode* 52(4): 998–1016. https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12545

Hajer, M.A. 1995. *The politics of environmental discourse: Ecological modernization and the policy process*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/019829333x.003.0007

Jabeen, I. 2024. The portrayal of environmental concerns: An ecolinguistic analysis of media discourse. *World Journal of English Language* 14(5): 13–24. https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v14n5p13

Jindřichovská, I. and Eckert, E. 2021. Social responsibility of mining companies at a time of COVID-19: Dear shareholders! *Sustainability* 13(1): 1–20. https://doi.org/10.3390/su13010220

Khotimah, K., Laksono, K. and Suhartono, S. 2022. Patterns of dysphemism of COVID-19 news in Indonesian mass media: Critical eco-discourse analysis. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Scientific Studies* 5(4): 428–434. https://doi.org/10.53894/ijirss.v5i4.1015

Khotimah, K., Laksono, K., Suhartono, S., Pairin, U. and Darni, D. 2021. The ecological impact of the Covid-19 pandemic infodemic discourse in social media: Ecolinguistic perspectives. *Procedia of Social Sciences and Humanities* 1: 117–128. https://doi.org/10.21070/pssh.v1i.31

Kompas.com. 2025. Tambang di Raja Ampat, pemerintah tak perlu ragu tindak pelaku yang melanggar. 9 June. Retrieved from https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2025/06/09/13222141/tambang-di-raja-ampat-pemerintah-tak-perlu-ragu-tindak-pelaku-yang-melanggar (accessed 26 August 2025).

Kompas.id. 2025a. Mereka yang bertanggung jawab atas kerusakan di Raja Ampat. 9 June. Retrieved from https://www.kompas.id/artikel/mereka-yang-bertanggung-jawab-atas-kerusakan-di-raja-ampat (accessed 26 August 2025).

Kompas.id. 2025b. Even bishops in Papua are furious over Raja Ampat's environmental damage. 9 June. Retrieved from https://www.kompas.id/artikel/en-bahkan-uskup-di-papua-pun-geram-atas-kerusakan-alam-raja-ampat (accessed 20 September 2025).

Muliawati, F.D. 2025. Ada oknum tak ingin hilirisasi RI maju, Bahlil: Karena sudah nyaman! *CNBC Indonesia*, 20 July. Retrieved from https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/news/20251020154902-4-677573/ada-oknum-tak-ingin-hilirisasi-ri-maju-bahlil-karena-sudah-nyaman (accessed 27 September 2025).

Mustika, P.P. 2025. Mereka yang bertanggung jawab atas kerusakan di Raja Ampat. *Kompas.id*, 9 June. Retrieved from https://www.kompas.id/artikel/mereka-yang-bertanggung-jawab-atas-kerusakan-di-raja-ampat (accessed 27 September 2025).

Nugraheny, D.E. and Djumena, E. 2025. Bahlil pastikan PT Gag tetap bisa lanjutkan tambang nikel di Raja Ampat. *Kompas.com*, 10 June. Retrieved from https://money.kompas.com/read/2025/06/10/134554626/bahlil-pastikan-pt-gag-tetap-bisa-lanjutkan-tambang-nikel-di-raja-ampat (accessed 27 September 2025).

Purnomo, H. 2025. Bahlil sebut ada pihak asing tak suka proyek hilirisasi RI. *Detik.com*, 5 June. Retrieved from https://finance.detik.com/energi/d-7950643/bahlil-sebut-ada-pihak-asing-tak-suka-proyek-hilirisasi-ri (accessed 27 September 2025).

Quito, B., Rama, M.D.R., García, J.A. and Durán-Sánchez, A. 2022. Impacts of industrialization, renewable energy and urbanization on the global ecological footprint: A quantile regression approach. *Business Strategy and the Environment* 32(4): 1529–1541. https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.3203

Robbins, P. 2012. *Political ecology*: A *critical introduction*. 2nd Ed. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Rochyadi-Reetz, M. 2022. News sourcing practices in climate reporting in Indonesia. *Journalism Studies* 23(2): 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2022.2115392

Sadiq, U., Alam, R. and Rehman, A.A.U. 2025. Ecolinguistic analysis of environmental discourse in Pakistani print and digital media. *The Critical Review of Social Sciences Studies* 3(1): 3495–3505. https://doi.org/10.59075/pr64q758

Sahide, M.A.K., Fisher, M.R., Erbaugh, J.T., Intarini, D., Dharmiasih, W., Makmur, M., Faturachmat, F., Verheijen, B. and Maryudi, A. 2020. The boom of social forestry policy and the bust of social forests in Indonesia: Developing and applying an access-exclusion framework to assess policy outcomes. *Forest Policy and Economics* 120: 102290. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.forpol.2020.102290

Sahide, M.A.K., Fisher, M.R., Sirimorok, N., Faturachmat, F., Dhiaulhaq, A., Maryudi, A., Batiran, K.B. and Supratman, S. 2023. Blind spots and spotlights in bureaucratic politics: An analysis of policy co-production in environmental governance dynamics in Indonesia. *Development Policy Review* 41(5): e12693. https://doi.org/10.1111/dpr.12693

Schimberg, R. 2024. The influence of environmental reporting on policy making. *Journal of Communication* 5(1): 14–26. https://doi.org/10.47941/jcomm.1688

Stibbe, A. 2015. *Ecolinguistics: Language, ecology and the stories we live by*. London: Routledge.

Tempo.co. 2025a. Raja Ampat: Surga terakhir dunia dan Geopark UNESCO yang terancam tambang nikel. 10 June. Retrieved from https://www.tempo.co/lingkungan/raja-ampat-surga-terakhir-dunia-dan-geopark-unesco-yang-terancam-tambang-nikel--1674019 (accessed 27 September 2025).

Tempo.co. 2025b. Kontroversi viral diduga kapal angkut nikel bernama JKW Mahakam dan Dewi Iriana. 13 June. Retrieved from https://www.tempo.co/arsip/kontroversi-viral-diduga-kapal-angkut-nikel-bernama-jkw-mahakam-dan-dewi-iriana-1685672 (accessed 27 September 2025).

Tempo.co. 2025c. Komnas HAM selidiki proses perizinan tambang nikel Raja Ampat. 14 June. Retrieved from https://www.tempo.co/hukum/komnas-ham-selidiki-proses-perizinan-tambang-nikel-raja-ampat--1695609 (accessed 22 September 2025).

Tempo.co. 2025d. Eddy Soeparno minta dugaan pelanggaran tambang di Raja Ampat diusut. 8 June. Retrieved from https://www.tempo.co/ekonomi/eddy-soeparno-minta-dugaan-pelanggaran-tambang-di-raja-ampat-diusut-1673340 (accessed 20 September 2025).

Tempo.co. 2025e. Bahlil Lahadalia: Ada pihak asing tidak senang dengan proyek hilirisasi. 5 June. Retrieved from https://www.tempo.co/ekonomi/bahlil-lahadalia-ada-pihak-asing-tidak-senang-dengan-proyek-hilirisasi-1653127 (accessed 20 September 2025).

Van Dijk, T.A. 1998. *Ideology*: A *multidisciplinary approach*. London: Sage Publications.