



Green Education for Kids: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Environmental Narratives on National Geographic Kids Website

Dr. Adnan Mohammed Bataineh¹, Mohammed Ali Al-Zaabi², Halima Ali Sulaiman AL-Maktumi³, Muzna Yaqoob Alsarmi⁴, Eassa Ali⁵

Abstract

This study employs discourse analysis to investigate ten environmental resources from National Geographic Kids to identify the climate and sustainability frames presented to children, the language, and themes as well as values implicit in texts about climate change, plastic pollution, recycling, water conservation, the circular economy, and global goals. The results suggest that the messages in the corpus address environmental issues in an accessible and children-friendly language and in motivating imperatives. The materials heavily focus on individual actions like recycling, cutting down on plastics, conserving water, altering travel patterns, and nurturing positive attitudes through science and innovations, as well as green consumerism. Concurrently, the pieces cast nature mostly in human-centered terms, with limited attention to the structural or political causes of environmental damage. This gives rise to an environmental discourse that is both stimulating and instructive, but also overly simplistic and devoid of politics. Based on the findings of the research, the resources to motivate children to behave in an environmentally friendly manner. However, they tend to frame environmental responsibility as a personal moral and consumer issue rather than a systemic one. The report also reveals the immense potential of environmental media and the need for increased critical ecological education.

¹English Lecturer, University of Buraimi, Oman, adnan.m@uob.edu.om, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3888-4759>

²English Language Instructor, Shinas Vocational College, Oman, s9514@shinasvc.edu.om, <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-3066-9185>

³GFP (General Foundation Program), Sohar University, Oman, HSulaiman@su.edu.om, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8215-2707>

⁴independent researcher muzna979905@gmail.com, <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-6712-7614>

⁵Assistant Professor, Faculty of Language Studies, Sohar University, Oman, eali@su.edu.om, <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-8271-1545>

Keywords: environmental discourse; children's media; climate change; eco-citizenship; critical discourse analysis

Introduction

The Critical Importance of Childhood Environmental Socialization

Children are not just passive recipients of knowledge about the environment; rather, they do much more than this. They actively engage in constructing an understanding of the relationship there is between humans and the natural environment. The process of growing up environmentally starts at an early age. During this period, attitudes regarding nature, conservation and the environment are formed. The programs that set a foundation for environmental education at an early age help to create citizens who take action to preserve the planet. It will be more effective if school, family, natural environment, and community (Aquiye-Mansilla, 2025) totally integrate it. Studies indicate that children who engage in environmental education programs based on nature have better pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors. There is also improvement in positive prosocial behavior or empathy (Watt & Frydenberg, 2024). Additionally, children's environmental attitudes and emotional responses to environmental issues develop through observational learning and social context, Mokhele-Ramulumo (2025) believes. Childhood environmental education enhances knowledge acquisition and value development and helps improve mental health later in life (Watt & Frydenberg, 2024).

The Digital Transformation of Environmental Education

The digital transformation of environmental education is opening the door to new possibilities for reaching children with nature content, conservation messaging, and climate literacy. In a study by Husamah (2025) for instance, it was revealed that the use of augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and mobile apps in environmental education is turning into an increasingly vital focus area for research. This new, global electronic sphere does allow children greater access to environmental information. However, it does it in an editorially mediated, visually framed, linguistically coded, and ideologically underpinned manner, which children are unaware of as constructed rather than neutral. Khalifé et al. (2022) states that environmental education primarily aims to target the belief system of the youth and raise specific issues that are related to ecology and sustainability. However, the use of digital space is increasing to be the main source of knowledge on matters of environment among children.

The Problem: Unexamined Discursive Constructions in Digital Environmental Education

Although there are digital environmental education platforms, not much work has been done on their discursive constructions. Most work in environmental education has focused on formal schooling contexts, curriculum documents, and textbook analyses. Digital media often receive less attention. When they do receive attention, it is often treated as a delivery device – without any analytical significance – or as an extra resource. In this context, it is also often treated as being neutral. (Husamah, 2025) When researchers study digital environmental content, they tend to investigate pedagogical impacts, user interaction statistics, or design features rather than the discursive formations that inform understandings of environmental problems and solutions. Especially in situations where the formal environmental education system is weak or non-existent, digital platforms have increasingly become a main source of environmental knowledge for children. Not having a critical discourse analysis of digital environmental education means that the performances that take place in environmental education platforms make certain narratives seem natural and others marginally goes unexplored.

Rationale for Analyzing National Geographic Kids

National Geographic Kids is a particularly interesting case for analyzing digital environmental education discourse. As an offshoot of one of the world's largest non-profit scientific and educational body – the National Geographic Society, which is over a century old – the platform enjoys institutional authority and cultural cachet that far exceeds that of normal children's websites. The National Geographic brand is associated with authoritative nature photography and scientific resources and educational legitimacy. This influence is especially strong within the children's sector. The platform has received official climate-conscious website status from the Eco-Friendly Web Alliance as a teacher and environmentalist (Nat Geo Kids, 2026). But does this not this positioning raise questions about what environmental messages National Geographic Kids is sending children? How is the problem defined and who is to blame? What ideologies related to nature, humanity, and environmental action are inherent in the platform?

Research Questions and Objectives

This study deals with two basic questions based on Fairclough's three-dimensional model of CDA which concentrates on the linkages of language, power, and ideology (Al-Mas'udi & A'mer Al-A'mery, 2021).

1. How does the digital content of National Geographic Kids characterize environmental problems and their solutions for children?
2. What are the language and visual strategies employed by the platform to create environmental narratives and communicate environmental knowledge?
3. What ideologies are embedded in the discourse about nature, human/nature relationships, and environmental responsibility?

The objective of this research is to analyse the various discursive representations of the environment in National Geographic Kids, to observe the linguistic and multimodal devices used in framing, and to uncover the ideological assumption in the environmental educational content. This study answers the question of how digital environmental education leads to the formation of children's environmental consciousness. It also argues for the employment of critical discourse analysis as a necessary tool for understanding the ideological work done by neutral educational content.

Literature Review

Theories of Ecolinguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis: How Language Constructs Our Understanding of Nature

Ecolinguistics studies how language creates relationships between human beings, other life forms, and the material world, and is normatively oriented to keep and safeguard life-sustaining relationships (Alexander, 2014). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which has traditionally focused on the role of language in human oppression, provides the methodological basis for CDA of Environmental Communication. The discourse approach in ecolinguistics is how powerful groups choose groups of linguistic features that tell particular stories about nature. We need to uncover those tales, and if they lead to harm in the ecosystem, resist them. (Stibbe, 2017)

This theoretical framework connects cognitive science and critical discourse analysis and examines how cognitive structures such as metaphors and framings emerge as discourse (Stibbe, 2017). As critical discourse analysts must take account of multimodal phenomena constructed through not only language but also other resources such as image and sound, there has been a growth in the need for multimodal analysis. According to Cui (2024), multimodal ecological discourse analysis considers the workings of language and image modalities with ecological philosophy to examine their representation and ecological orientation in digital media contexts. The link between ecolinguistics and positive discourse analysis has also appeared important as they consider how language can motivate people to protect ecosystems through empowering interdiscursive practices (Sokoł 2022).

Environmental Education for Children: Pedagogical Approaches and the Role of Digital Media

Interactive educational technology is important for the socialization of primary school pupils and for their communicative and environmental literacy. (Evdokimov et al., 2025). Thus, these materials provide children with experiences that come remarkably close to life, helping them study processes that they cannot study otherwise. It broadens their view of the world. Also, it will inculcate social skills and environmental responsibility.

The integration of diverse types of digital media including mobile applications, Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality, videos, and online discussions have demonstrated enormous potential in improving cognitive development, creativity, and environmental awareness in environmental education. (Brečka et al., 2022). As per research, digital technologies are increasingly relied upon by children to facilitate learning for the environment. The collective experiences with digital technology contribute toward developing ecological literacy (Lin & Ardoin, 2023). Environmental games and simulations provide an interactive learning method suitable especially for younger students whose nature is to learn through play (Brečka et al., 2022).

The effects of various media types are mixed and depend on accessibility, interactivity, and pedagogy integration. Projects that incorporate media to teach young children nature awareness, such as the Plum Landing PBS Kids series, show how six- to eight-year-old children can be motivated to investigate through videos, games, apps, and firsthand activities (Paulsen et al., 2021).

New evidence suggest children do not understand the cause of the environment. Studies conducted with 5- to 11-year-olds indicate that children show a great deal of awareness about environmental destruction and its consequences on animals. Furthermore, they often depict humans as bystanders or heroes, but rarely as people who cause environmental damage (Sauntson et al., 2026). The visual elements of eco-narratives frequently suggest that the damage done to the environment is agentless. This may lead children to think humans are not responsible for environmental problems.

Media Representation of Nature: How Organizations Like National Geographic Frame Ecology

Various media channels are important in shaping the public understanding of environmental issues. National Geographic is a leading nonprofit scientific and educational institution with a strong cultural status and institutional authority which extends far beyond most media (Karyotakis, 2025). Likewise, its information is regarded as more potent due to its effectiveness in furthering environmental issues. For a long time, the organization's brand has evoked images of powerful nature photography, scientific discovery, and educational legitimacy.

New forecasts point out unintended consequences of land-based climate change. Karyotakis (2025) pointed out that Wildlife Watch criticizes the commodification and exploitation of nature along with exposing the media's dramatization and distortion of the environmental narrative. It highlights the need for political accountability and action for endangered species. According to the study, National Geographic does present material that contradicts myths while also promoting ecological citizenship, but commercial influences do affect some of National Geographic's eco-presentations. The competing views of education mission and commercial interest create a complex discursive environment where environmental narratives are built, sometimes in cooperation and competition.

Media representations often serve to naturalize environmental narratives. They present certain understandings of nature as unavoidable while disrupting others. The process of framing works by selecting and combining some linguistic features, visuals and narrative structures that work together to create specific relationships between humans and the environment (Alexander, 2014). Environmental media often features “shallow environmentalism” that raises environmental awareness but fails to deliver educational experiences that help audiences develop critical environmental literacy (Xiong, 2014).

Gaps in the Current Literature: Why a CDA of Children's Environmental Narratives is Needed

The discursive construction of environmental narratives addressed to youth remains underexplored despite the existence of various digital environmental education platforms. The dearth of research into the narratives in the media consumed by children means substantial knowledge is lacking on how commercial and pedagogic media shape children's environmental awareness (Flowerdew & Richardson, 2018). Considering that children increasingly rely on digital platforms for environmental knowledge, this gap is especially troublesome.

The absence of a critical discourse analysis of the digital environmental education industry means the ideological work of these platforms which normalize certain environmental ideas while marginalizing others remains intact. Most studies on environmental education focus on formal schooling contexts, curriculum documents, and textbook analyses. Digital platforms are mostly conceived as neutral delivery mechanisms or as supplementary resources that have no analytical significance of their own (Husamah, 2025). Examination of digital environmental content tends to concentrate on pedagogical outcomes, user engagement metrics, or technical design features – not the underlying discursive structures.

It is worth highlighting the absence of multimodal critical discourse analysis of child environmental media. Cui (2024) points out that while multimodal ecological discourse analysis has been applied to public welfare films and adult men's environmental content, little is known about its application to children's digital environmental education. Ecolinguistics, multi-modal analysis, and child-focused environmental education provide an important gap in theory and methodology.

Children's eco-narratives often portray environmental damage as agentless events. Because of media, it leads to children lacking any understanding of human responsibility (Sauntson et al., 2026). Nevertheless, we have not studied the specific discursive mechanisms through which media texts construct these framings. The emergence of Positive Discourse Analysis in conjunction with ecolinguistics gives a number of interesting theoretical directions although this approach is not applied to children's environmental media (Sokoł, 2022).

This study aims to close this gap in chapter two by utilizing Fairclough's three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis to investigate the discursive constructions of environmental narratives featured on National Geographic Kids. It explores the linguistic and multimodal strategies used to frame environmental issues and the underlying ideological assumptions informing the environmental education content on the platform.

Methodology

1. Research Design

Using Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the study is qualitative in nature. Fairclough's framework examines the interrelationship between language, power, and ideology on three interrelated levels of description, interpretation, and explanation: texts, discursive practices, and social practices, and therefore, how language, power, hegemony, and ideology are interrelated (Al-Mas'udi & A'mer Al-A'mery, 2021). The textual dimension explores meaning through an examination of linguistic features. The discursive practice dimension investigates language use in social contexts. The social practice dimension studies wider social structures that shape discourse (Sokoł, 2022). This strategy looks at the connections between language, power and ideology not only makes it essential but also appropriate to explore the ideological assumptions that underline children's environmental education content (Mokhele-Ramulumo, 2025).

3. Data Corpus and Selection Criteria

These ten environmental resources from National Geographic Kids (NGK) make up the corpus. The texts are chosen to cover the topics of climate change, plastic pollution, recycling, water conservation, circular economy and global goals. The materials used in the study are public materials which can be accessed through uploaded materials, and the corpus is regarded as a limited sample of child-oriented EE materials. Each resource is evaluated as a whole text, some are single page resources, and some are multi page documents in pdf format, for this purpose the internal pages of the document are also analysed where applicable. Table 1 shows the full corpus used for this study, giving details of all the texts included in the data set. The table presents key information about each text, creating a clear overview of the composition of the corpus.

Table 1. Corpus of texts included in the study

Text ID	File name	Title	Form at	Environmental focus	Status in corpus	Notes
---------	-----------	-------	---------	---------------------	------------------	-------

T1	climate_change_challenge_primary_resource.pdf	Climate Challenge!	PDF	Climate change, carbon emissions, renewable energy, transport	Included	Core climate text used for analysis of responsibility and solution framing.
T2	Plastic-Pollution-Primary-Resource-Page-1.pdf	The Plastic Problem!	PDF	Plastic pollution, oceans, microbeads, consumer action	Included	First page of plastic pollution resource.
T3	Plastic-Pollution-Primary-Resource-Page-2.pdf	What Else Can We Do to Save Our Seas?!	PDF	Overfishing, climate change, ocean protection, energy use	Included	Second page of the same plastic/ocean resource.
T4	Recycling-Primary-Resource-Page-1.pdf	What a Load of Rubbish! / Go Green!	PDF	Recycling, landfill, incineration, waste sorting	Included	First page of recycling resource.
T5	Recycling-Primary-Resource-Page-2.pdf	From Old to New...	PDF	Recycling processes, material transformation	Included	Second page of recycling resource.
T6	The-Circular-Economy-Primary-Resource-Page-1.pdf	Circular economy resource beginning "ALL ABOUT"	PDF	Circular economy, waste, repair, reuse, design	Included	First page of circular economy resource.
T7	The-Circular-Economy-Primary-Resource-Page-2.pdf	Innovation in Action! / Chemist Chat!	PDF	Circular economy, materials innovation, repair, reuse	Included	Second page of circular economy resource.
T8	Water-Conservation-Primary-Resource.pdf	Twenty-five ways you can be a Water Hero	PDF	Water conservation, pollution prevention, wildlife protection	Included	Action-oriented environmental advice text.
T9	Water-Facts-Primary-Resource.pdf	20 Cool Things About Water	PDF	Water facts, freshwater use, wildlife, scarcity	Included	Fact-based water resource.
T10	global-goals-primary-resource-page-1.pdf	Make Some Global Goals!	PDF	Sustainability, inequality, climate action, consumption	Included	Broad sustainability and development text.

Note. The table includes only texts actually uploaded and used in the study corpus.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Focus on the environment, climate, conservation, pollution, sustainability, recycling, water, and/or circular economy.
- Writing geared towards children or suitable for children to access. Qualitative CDE length and detail sufficient.
- Publicly available National Geographic Kids resources included in the uploaded corpus.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Content which is not relevant to the environment.
- Environmental reference is noticeably short or incidental and is not analysed within the text.
- Material aimed primarily at adults

The final corpus has ten articles that are appropriate for qualitative CDA, and the scope is not too big (Cui, 2024).

3. Data Analysis Procedures

The analysis is based on Fairclough's three-dimensional model. It explores the textual level of lexical choice, imperatives, modality, transitivity, metaphor, and evaluation. It looks at headline, typography, layout, visual hierarchy, images, color and visual narrative of the website at the multimodal level. The study examines the positioning of child readers in the texts, how information and instruction are intertwined in the texts, and how to present environmental

knowledge as accessible and actionable at the discursive practice level. Social practice level analysis explains the ideological meaning of the corpus particularly in terms of the allocation of responsibility between people, institutions and systems.

4. Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

Trustworthiness is maintained through: **Objectivity** via systematic coding procedures documented for examination; **Replicability** through specified selection criteria, keywords, and analytical procedures enabling other researchers to apply methodology (Husamah, 2025); **Text-based nature** ensuring conclusions grounded in empirical evidence.

Trustworthiness is achieved because of the following. Objectivity can be done due to systematic coding procedure which is recorded for auditing. **Replicability** can be used due to selection criteria, key word, and analysis that are specified so that other research works can use the method. Then text-based nature so the conclusion can be possible due to evidence from the data. (Husamah, 2025)

Ethical considerations:

Ethical considerations are not present because the study used tests taken from publicly available content that does not contain private and sensitive information and acknowledged National Geographic Kids as a source while ensuring that the copyrighted material is not reproduced beyond the threshold of fair use. This research did not involve human participation hence no informed consent needed. Data analysis of published education content is completed according to research (Brečka et al., 2022).

Results and Discussion

Overview of the corpus

The ten resources habitually shape environmental education using imperative language directed towards children. Using repetitive phrases like “How YOU can help! The phrases “Find out how YOU can help,” “See how YOU can help, too,” and “You can make a BIG difference” position the child reader as an active environmental subject. Simultaneously, the materials rarely take on a sustained ecological critique but lean on simplification, motivational framing, and solution-oriented discourse.

Visual Analysis

The layout, headings and diagrams and numbering of the text corpus facilitate the environmental information to be accessed by children effortlessly. Instead of long paragraphs, the materials break content into short segments like “PLANET PROBLEMS” and “PLANET SOLUTIONS” in Make Some Global Goals! and WICKED WIND, SUPER SUN! Climate Challenge! features Health Challenges and How We Go.

A prominent pattern is the use of segmentation. Within The Plastic Issue! The page contains a dedicated section on “How You Can Help”, “NO MORE MICROBEADS,” “PLASTIC FANTASTIC?”, “SEALIFE STRUGGLES,” and “INTO THE FOOD CHAIN,” which leads the reader step by step from problem to solution. The Layout Is Similarly Organized Into Sections Like “LANDFILL,” “INCINERATORS,” “RECYCLING!”, “Rules of Recycling” and “YOU CAN!” rendering the waste cycle easier to visualize” Such structure aids readers in navigating the topic, but it also breaks down environmental complexity into separate units, making it easier to digest.

The corpus also employs diagrams and transformations to illustrate ecological processes. Environmental Trouble! The diagram of greenhouse effect includes labelled parts and has words like “ATMOSPHERE,” “SUN’S RAYS,” “GREENHOUSE GASES INCLUDING CO₂” making climate science easy to understand. The exhibition, From Old to New... looks at the circular economy through a diagram of materials flows and the transformation of products: for example, a jam jar becomes insulation, and a can becomes a family car. These images work because they make abstract processes tangible, but they also make environmental systems seem much tidier and more predictable than they really are.

Another prominent feature is the use of numbered and bullet-point lists. The text in twenty-five ways you can be a WATER HERO presents twenty-five separate tips in a numbered format. In the page entitled “Make Some Global Goals!” employs bullet points to list actions such as turning lights off, taking shorter showers, and using public transport. This structure is practical and instructional. It offers the reader a clear sequence of actions instead of asking for open-ended reflection. As a result, the texts teach environmental behaviour in a direct way, but they also limit the range of responses they encourage.

The corpus also uses direct address to capture the attention of the child reader. For instance, is directly placed inside the message in The Plastic Problem! Because of the repeated phrase “How YOU can help!” In Climate Challenge! the presence of the phrase “DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY & CLIMATE CHANGE” close to “YOU,” makes the reader’s role explicit. It can be also seen that the title “In 25 ways you can be a WATER HERO” gives the child a positive identity. In Make Some Global Goals! the final call to action from public figures adds authority and urgency. These choices enhance engagement, but on the other side they frame environmental action as an individual.

The corpus' visual layout is comprehensible, user-friendly and child centred. Its sections give examples of transformations of environmental problems into simple, actionable forms by relying on headings, lists, diagrams. The authorisation can therefore not be said to prohibit us from formulating our own interpretations.

Theme 1: Human-centered ecology

A frequent framing device within the corpus is human utility and human impact. The water facts resource opens with the facts that "UP TO 60% OF THE HUMAN BODY IS WATER", "844 MILLION PEOPLE DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER", and that "EVERY PERSON IN THE BRITISH ISLES USES 150 LITRES OF WATER A DAY". While including information about animals, the page states that water is necessary for human lives to survive. The ending statement, which reads, "OUR PLANET AND ITS PEOPLE NEED FRESHWATER TO SURVIVE," shows the text prioritizes the survival of the human species.

The circular economy text further frames the human dimension. Presently, we humans create way too much waste, and we all need to buy less stuff and get more use out of stuff we already own." Often referenced as the "original circular economy," nature is only invoked to the extent that it supports a human redesign of products and consumption. The neat logic of the page reinforces this reading: this diagram which runs TAKE / MAKE / WASTE / USE / RECYCLE presents the environment as a system to be managed by human production decisions.

Moreover, the recycling resource begins with "It takes just over three weeks for the UK to generate a waste quick enough to fill the Royal Albert Hall! The waste we create comes from the planet's natural resources and like all refuse ends up in the sea. The environment can be thought of as a storehouse of inputs and a sink for outputs. The ecological issue remains framed through human systems of sorting, manufacturing, and disposal even when the text talks about whirring machines, big magnets, and workers. This generates an eco-centrism in which nature is recognized but primarily as something humans use, damage, and repair.

Theme 2: Individual action and depoliticized responsibility

Another recurrent theme is a strong focus on individual behaviour. The plastic pollution resource begins with "How YOU can help!" and encourages consumers to "Drink from reusable water bottles, use multi-use shopping bags and recycle all the plastic that you can." The water conservation sheet also gives direct instructions: "TURN OFF THE TAP," "TAKE SHORT SHOWERS," "DRINK from a REUSABLE WATER BOTTLE," and "SHARE these blue tips with FRIENDS AND FAMILY!" The recycling site captures the same educational spirit: "Before you throw anything away – STOP and THINK! Check with your local council to see what you can and cannot recycle.

These repetitions of "you" engender a powerful individualizing discourse. Young people are not only given the information but also motivated and challenged to reflect on issues regarding the environment. The climate resource also states that the government's Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) is challenging YOU to be effective on our planet by 2050!". While it does feature references to fossil fuels, carbon emissions, and renewable energy, the answer nonetheless runs with everyday travel choices: 'making more journeys by train – or even better, by bike or on foot.' Similar to this, the global goals page makes the case that "We are causing these problems – we can fix them! But there is an immediate transition to household behaviours like "Turn lights and electronics off," "Do not leave taps running," "Car share or cycle walk or use public transport."

Ideologically, this is Important. The texts recognize big problems, but their main grammar pushes responsibility away to personal habits. Corporate, industrial, and state accountability are only lightly visible. The outcome is a detaching of politicized environmental speech act, whereby children learn climatic responsibility to be entirely a matter of moral self-discipline, re-usable objects, and careful consumption. The text promotes good habits, but it does not cultivate a robust sense of systemic environmental politics.

Theme 3: Technological optimism and managed hope

The body of work balances the crisis with optimism. Extreme verbiage appears alongside technical reassurance in the climate change resource. Fossil fuel power stations do not need to be damaging to the environment! Scientists have developed a new kind of power station that captures carbon and transports it safely somewhere else. Renewable energy is often referred to as great news for our planet, and they would present solar and wind as practical and yet further "Clever! "Solutions. The impact is that climate change is deemed as a problem that technology can solve.

The reasoning presented in the circular economy pages is augmented. "We are working on exploring its use for elastic textile fibres," "scientific developments are crucial for helping us protect our environment," "new creative invention to make the world a better place." Waste can be more than just a problem; it can be a resource: "we preserve natural resources and turn something considered waste into something useful". This page also mentions mushroom packaging, repair cafés, Freecycle, ReTuna and Patagonia's Worn Wear as examples of innovation and reuse. The language used in these examples transforms them into a happy solution narrative.

Even the text about plastic pollution follows this framework. It begins by discussing the "Devastating consequences of this life-threatening litter" but it is followed by good news. It talks about bans on microbeads and the lesser use of plastic bags. The article wraps up with, "Always remember that we can make a difference!" The signature pattern managing eco-anxiety promises that we can work towards playgrounds that we know can be solved. Just as with climate change, with the right policy, science, and consumer choice, current problems can be solved. The social

implication is a techno-optimistic environmentalism that inspires hope but also risks downplaying the magnitude of structural ecological crisis.

Theme 4: Moral pedagogy and eco-citizenship

Across the spectrum of training, moral training is environmental education. The recycling article praises the reader with “Good work, kids! Superb and excellent work.” According to the water conservation page, you can make a SIGNIFICANT difference and calls the child a WATER HERO.’ The objective of creating the Global Goals page is to get inspired, get involved and says, “ARE YOU!” Environmental behavior is seen as a personal virtue in this language. The discursive practice is obviously child oriented. The texts are broken into visual segments, use big headings, short clauses, repeating rhetorical questions, plus they offer “tips,” “facts” and “do/don’t” lists. This simplification makes this accessible for kids, but it also limits the complexity of the message. Rather than challenging kids to interpret competing causes or policy debates in environmental education, these resources simply tell kids what a good environmental actor should do. The website socializes children into a consumer-friendly model of green citizenship in this sense.

Critical synthesis

The results answered the research questions suitably. Firstly, asserting that the environment is a genuine issue that is still solvable. Also, it builds environmental responsibility through direct address, imperatives, and child-scale actions like recycling, saving water and avoiding plastic. Third, the ideology embedded stewardship of the world is anthropocentric, individual responsibility, and technological optimism.

The ideological consequences are mixed. The corpus surely promotes environmental awareness in such a lively child-friendly manner. However, it tends to reproduce a constrained form of environmental literacy: practical, cheerful, and consumerist rather than deeply critical. The literature instructs children on green behaviour more than it helps them interrogate the systems that cause ecological harm in the first place. In that way, the site promotes environmental action but not entirely critical environmental consciousness.

Recommendations

This corpus should be used as a teaching-oriented environmental discourse set. The most consistent and strongest pattern in its contents is not neutral reporting but guided eco-citizenship. The frequent reminders to children to “turn lights and electronics off”, “take short showers”, “use less plastic” and “recycle all the plastic that you can” imply that any recommendation would stress the site’s high motivational analysis uses, but low balanced debate usefulness.

Going forward, the website needs a clearer discussion of structural responsibility in educational design. Today, the messages on the pages shift often from systemic problems to individual solutions, like from “The fuels we burn are choking the atmosphere” to “Don’t leave taps running” and “Car share or cycle, walk or use public transport.” It benefits younger readers, but it risks implying that the biggest burden rests with households, not governments and industry. A better model would combine more child-friendly tips with a clearer explanation of policy, production, and corporate responsibility.

A more balanced approach with anthropocentric and ecocentric views would be beneficial for the corpus. Water resource and water conservation sheet typically frames water in terms of people’s needs, habits, and consumption, even when they mention wildlife. Resources for the future could attempt to balance narrative space for ecosystem and ecological interdependence of nonhumans, so that children learn that rivers and oceans and soils matter not only because they are useful to us humans, but also because they are alive.

One last suggestion is to keep the same accessible style but tone down the overdependence on cheerful simplification. Great! Sounds Impressive! Excellent news! Excellent job, children! You can make the pages engaging and yet tone down the gravity of issues like plastic pollution and climate change. The ideal model for future materials would combine positive action with a more critical explanation so that the children are encouraged to act while understanding why the problem exists in the first place.

Conclusion

An analysis of the ten National Geographic Kids resources shows that these resources present environmental issues in a coherence discourse of urgency, optimism, and action. The pages explain climate change, plastic pollution, recycling, water use and the circular economy in child-friendly language, and they constantly cast the reader as a person who can help. As a tool for children’s environmental education, this corpus is extremely effective because it enables the transformation of the global problem into the local choice.

Likewise, the analysis reveals evident ideological limits. The texts are heavily anthropocentric and usually give a value of the environment from the human survival, inhabitation and convenience point of view. Climate change is the consequence of collective behavior rather than the result of activities that can be controlled by individual consumption choices or waste management. These measures are also extremely nuanced, TSU says. Their optimism values technology, design, and consumer behavior over deeper structural critique.

Overall, the corpus offers one useful but bounded form of environmental citizenship. It promotes awareness, action and hope; however, it does not fully contest the social and economic systems causing ecological harm. Thus, the

resources are best seen not as neutral informational sheets, but as carefully crafted teaching texts encouraging children to be responsible environmental consumers.

References

- Alexander, R., & Stibbe, A. (2014). From the analysis of ecological discourse to the ecological analysis of discourse. *Language sciences*, 41, 104-110. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2013.08.011>
- Al-Mas'udi, H., & A'mer Al-A'mery. (2021). Fairclough and van Dijk models of critical discourse analysis. *Kufa Journal of Arts*, 1(48), 477-490. <https://doi.org/10.36317/kaj/2021/v1.i48.537>
- Aquije-Mansilla, M. (2025). Analysis of Theoretical Foundations on Environmental Awareness in Early Childhood Education: A Systematic Review. *Health Leadership and Quality of Life*, 4, 650. <https://doi.org/10.56294/hl2025650>
- Brečka, P., Valentová, M., & Tureková, I. (2022). Digital technologies in environmental education. *TEM Journal*, 11(2), 726-730. <https://www.cceol.com/search/article-detail?id=1045971>
- Cui, W. (2024). Multimodal ecological discourse analysis of the public welfare short film: Nature is Speaking. *Lecture Notes on Language and Literature*, 7, 104-109. <https://doi.org/10.23977/langl.2024.070218>
- Evdokimov, R., Sokolov, M., Ruzanov, S., Tarasova, I., Ershova, N., & Skaterschikova, A. (2025). ELECTRONIC EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES LESSONS AS AN ELEMENT OF DIGITAL UPBRINGING FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS. *International Journal of Ecosystems & Ecology Sciences*, 15(3). <https://doi.org/10.31407/ijees15.306>
- Flowerdew, J., & Richardson, J. E. (Eds.). (2018). *The Routledge handbook of critical discourse studies* (pp. 2-62). London: Routledge. (pp. 60-76). Routledge.
- Husamah, H., Rahardjanto, A., Permana, T. I., & Shukri, A. A. M. (2025). Integration of digital technologies in environmental education: A systematic review of trends, impacts, and future directions. *Jurnal Varidika*, 30-47. <https://doi.org/10.23917/varidika.v37i1.9908>
- Karyotakis, M. A. (2025). Framing Wildlife through National Geographic. *Environmental Communication and the Wild: Image, Industry, and Technology*, 223. Lexington Books.
- Khalifé, M., Chaker, R., & Gasparovic, S. (2022) Environmental education and digital solutions: An analysis of the Lebanese context's existing and possible digital actions. *Front. Educ.* 7:958569. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2022.958569>
- Mokhele-Ramulumo, M., Adekola, O. A., & Phala, T. (2025). Exploring children's emotional responses to pollution: Implications for environmental education. *Journal of Early Childhood Education Research*, 14(1), 28-46. <https://doi.org/10.58955/jecer.147025>
- Nat Geo Kids. (2026, May 12). The Nat Geo Kids website is carbon conscious. <https://www.natgeokids.com/ie/sustainability-news/the-nat-geo-kids-website-is-carbon-conscious/>
- National Geographic Kids. (n.d.). 20 cool things about water. <https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/primary-resource/water-facts-primary-resource/>
- National Geographic Kids. (n.d.). 25 ways you can be a water hero. <https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/teacher-category/geography/>
- National Geographic Kids. (n.d.). All about [circular economy resource]. [URL unavailable in uploaded files]
- National Geographic Kids. (n.d.). Climate challenge! <https://www.natgeokids.com/ie/primary-resource/climate-change-challenge-primary-resource/>
- National Geographic Kids. (n.d.). From old to new. [URL unavailable in uploaded files]
- National Geographic Kids. (n.d.). Innovation in action! [URL unavailable in uploaded files]
- National Geographic Kids. (n.d.). Make some global goals! [URL unavailable in uploaded files]
- National Geographic Kids. (n.d.). The plastic problem! <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/nature/kids-vs-plastic/article/pollution-1>
- National Geographic Kids. (n.d.). What a load of rubbish! <https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/primary-resource/recycling-primary-resource/>
- National Geographic Kids. (n.d.). What else can we do to save our seas?! [URL unavailable in uploaded files]
- O'Halloran, K. L., Tan, S., Smith, B. A., & Podlasov, A. (2011). Multimodal analysis within an interactive software environment: critical discourse perspectives. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 8(2), 109-125. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2011.558687>
- Paulsen, C. A., Carroll, E., Paulsen, O., & Andrews, J. R. (2021). Engaging children and families in active environmental science learning through digital media. *International Journal of Early Childhood Environmental Education*, 8(2), 43-58. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1298025>
- Sauntson, H., & Cunningham, C. (2026). 'The end of civilisation': Exploring children's eco-narratives through an analysis of visual grammar. *Language Sciences*, 114, 101779. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2025.101779>
- Sokoł, M. (2022). "Together we can all make little steps towards a better world": Interdiscursive construction of ecologically engaged voices in YouTube vlogs. *Text & Talk*, 42(4), 525-546. <https://doi.org/10.1515/text-2020-0089>
- Stibbe, A. (2017). *Critical discourse analysis and ecology: An introduction to ecolinguistics*. University of Gloucestershire. <https://eprints.glos.ac.uk/2549/>

28. Watt, B. A., & Frydenberg, E. (2024). Early childhood education for sustainability: Outcomes for social and emotional learning. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/18369391241287939>
29. Xiong, T. (2014). Shallow Environmentalism: A Preliminary Eco-Critical Discourse Analysis of Secondary School English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Texts in China. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 45(4), 232–242. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00958964.2014.943686>