

Whether GREEN ECONOMY is of Ecological Appliability?

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Abstract: This present study is widely under the framework of ecolinguistics, and narrowly following Halliday's ecolinguistic notion, just to explore whether some economic expressions like green economy cause certain side-effects on the environment people have been living. Or in other words, it will be testified whether those economic expressions are of ecological applicability to the construction of well-balanced ecology. Basing on COCA, the present study has been conducted to answer: (a) whether certain expressions, GREEN ECONOMY has been existing in the corpus of COCA and how the frequency is; and (b) whether such expression had been of ecological applicability to reshape people's minds to avoid causing effects on the ecology. The result shows: (a) the expression of GREEN ECONOMY has been occurring at the frequency of 63 during the year of 1990 to the year of 2017, and within the year-period of 1990 to 2004, the frequency of the expression is zero. And (b) GREEN ECONOMY is metaphorical expression of some applicability to the construction of ecology for the plant-sense of "green". While due to the immature-sense of "green", such re-expression of GREEN ECONOMY is of needs to avoid such ambiguity caused by immature-sense.

1. Introduction

Some scholars on economy have been rethinking some expressions of economic concept after Lakoff & Johnson (1980). Fuel economy which is metaphorical expression from the perspective of linguistics refers to the main power for the modern society for decays, but due to the world-range ecology issue, there must be some other modal of powerful economy taking the place of the traditional fuel one, having been causing huge pollution into the environment as well as its productive. It is not allowable to make certain short-view productive at the cost of such long-period development of the whole ecology, composing of human beings and the living environment.

From the perspective of economic science, Green Economy is some kind of new economic modal to replace such fuel economy as it is named metaphorically to help people make sense of this new modal of economy. Different from the fuel economy, the new economy modal is powered by certain clear energy instead of fuel burning, to cause as little as possible on the growth of the global temperature. Being powered by the new economy modal, the development of the society will be no longer at the cost of the ecology as before.

From the perspective of linguistics, green economy is certain metaphorical expression, which is formed by the projection from "green things" to "economy". To mention something "green", it is directly thought of objects, like plants. Naming this new modal of economy by using this plant-like word is of help for people to make sense of the new economic modal and it seems an effective way rather than other blurring ones, such as "new". While except for the effective referring of the new economic modal, whether that name is of ecological applicability is a new question. Once concepts mis-expressed, some disaster results would be caused on the environment (Nerlich & Jaspal, 2012:143).

As to ecolinguistic studies, we are to find those new stories people live by, which are of power to reshape people's mind to think and behave ecologically and which are of encouragement for people to protect the ecology we are living (Stibbe, 2015). By encouragement of the new stories, named as

ecological expressions people will think and behave ecologically and further volunteer to protect the ecology. While those of some ecological applicability, which are not the new stories we live have to be reshaped into some ecological ones and those of little ecological applicability must be abandoned. Metaphorical expressions which are the main part of expressions do exist in these new living stories. As to those of ecological applicability, being of help for the construction of the ecology should be promoted to be certain new metaphors we live by as well.

This present study is widely under the framework of ecolinguistics, and narrowly following Halliday's ecolinguistic notion, just to explore whether in the field of economy there are some expressions like green economy that may cause certain side-effects on the environment. Or in other words, it will testify whether certain economic expressions are of ecological applicability to the construction of well-balanced ecology. Basing on COCA, the present study has been conducted to answer: (a) whether certain expressions, GREEN ECONOMY has been existing in the corpus of COCA and how the frequency is; and (b) whether such expression had been of ecological applicability to reshape people's minds to think and behave ecologically to spare their efforts to protect the environment for the win-win future of human beings and the whole ecology.

2. Metaphor Study from the Perspective of Ecolinguistics

To mention ecolinguistics, the concept of ecology of language must be presented first, which was noted by Haugen (1972) in the year of 1972, and according to his report it was that he had integrated the theory of environmental interaction from the subject of ecology into the linguistic subject. It is thought that similar to that there is close relating between animals/plants and their living environment, there must be some relationship between languages and their contents as well. Though the concept of ecology of language by Haugen had been noted as the birth of the theory of ecolinguistics, today's ecolinguistics is rather more than the beginning time.

While as to Today's ecolinguistics, it does be of two parts, one of which is relating to ecology of language, named as Haugen model and the other of which is on the effects brought by linguistic choices on environment, named as Halliday model. How could linguistic choices bring effect on environment? That was the notion given by Halliday (1990) in the year of 1990. Basing on his report, it was announced that linguists should burden the ecological responsibility to balance the development of human society as well as human living environment when studying languages. That languages could also cause some influence on certain environmental problems, as according to those common sayings about "growth", "bigness" and others, it is found that people pay more attention to bigness which is thought of better than smallness at any time. It is noted by Halliday that studies on linguistic phenomena are of great importance to the living environment as well as to the linguistic studies themselves. The year of 1990 has been the milestone of the development of the theory of ecolinguistics, and since then ecolinguistics had been a complete subject as others.

As a certain complete subject, under the frame of ecolinguistics there is also metaphor studies which is some different from those of cognitive linguistics, here naming as metaphors from the perspective of ecolinguistics. As it is known cognitive metaphors are of great influence from Lakoff & Johnson (1980), which had been taking metaphors as some cognitive expressions planting in people's mind and behaviors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999:58). To take the expression "argument is war" as certain example, "argument" is projected as "war" which in common sense is of wound, bloods and even death. By the sense of war, argument is metaphorically made sense of something bloody and fearful.

Whether metaphors mentioned above could bring some side-effects on people's living environment is the problem for ecolinguistics. People's living environment could be sensed widely which is more than referring to natural condition only. From the wide understanding, living environment is about anything, both physical and untouchable, named ecology. From the perspective of ecolinguistics, whether metaphorical expressions are of help to enhance the balance between people and the ecology is the point. To take the expression "ARGUMENT IS WAR" as an example as well, by the sense of war, argument is metaphorically made sense of something bloody and fearful, due to which people are willing to find some other methods rather than arguing

avoiding certain disharmonious matters caused among people. Standing on this spot, the expression “ARGUMENT IS WAR” could be the one trusted as eco-metaphor and should be promoted further.

Metaphor study from the perspective of ecolinguistics just to find metaphorical expressions, which are of ecological applicability (named as eco-metaphor), and which are of lack of ecological applicability (named as non-eco-metaphor). Such eco-metaphor expressions should be promoted for the reasons which could encourage people to reshape their minds to protect the ecology and the non-eco ones should be abandoned or re-expressed into some which are of ecological applicability. It is hoped that through eco-metaphors people think and behave ecologically for the whole ecology which is composed by human beings and the environment people are living.

3. Finding

By searching from the COCA online (<https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/>), it is found that the expression of GREEN ECONOMY has been occurring at the total frequency of 63 during the year of 1990 to the year of 2017, and within the year-period of 1990 to 2004, the frequency of the expression is zero (seen by Figure3-1). Halliday (1994) mentioned that meanings constructed via languages are the reflections of the society. During the years of 1970 to 2010, the main power of the society is fuel economy though the concept of green economy had been put forward as early as the year of 1989 by Pearce, a British environment-economist. That is the right reason for that within the year-period of 1990 to 2004, the frequency of GREEN ECONOMY is zero.

SEE CONTEXT: CLICK ON WORD [\[HELP ...\]](#)

CONTEXT

ALL

SPOKEN

FICTION

MAGAZINE

NEWSPAPER

ACADEMIC

1990-1994

1995-1999

2000-2004

2005-2009

2010-2014

2015-2017

1

GREEN ECONOMY

63

12

21

18

12

24

36

3

0.054 seconds

Figure 3-1 online searching result of GREEN METAPHOR

As it is found, the expression of GREEN ECONOMY has been occurring at the frequency of 63 during the nearly 30 years. The first time of its occurring was in the year of 2007 that is the ceremony year of Meteorological Congress of the United Nations (UNEP, 2011). On the congress, it has been announced that technological cooperation among nations is of importance to avoid the pollution caused by the over-use of fuel and some new clear energy is of emergency to take the place of such traditional power materials. Whether this new economy modal has been accepted by people is a question.

Corpus-based collocation factor is of help to understand the context of the right expression. By searching online, it is found that the collocations of GREEN ECONOMY at the most frequency are “new” (seen by Figure3-2) and “transition” (seen by Figure3-3). As some new posing economy modal, it is obviously unknown by the common, and it is common to think of it new. After the right “transition” which refers to the changing from fuel economy-powered stage to the green economy-powered one, maybe with the time-by people could have some further understanding of the economy modal as familiar as the traditional one.

	CONTEXT	FREQ	ALL	%	MI
1	NEW	6	154521	0.00	4.37
2	CAULK	1	85	1.18	12.61
3	PATHWAY	1	460	0.22	10.17
4	BLEAK	1	507	0.20	10.03
5	PATHWAYS	1	591	0.17	9.81
6	NICHE	1	756	0.13	9.46
7	FOCUSES	1	1653	0.06	8.33
8	INFRASTRUCTURE	1	2443	0.04	7.77
9	EMERGING	1	2935	0.03	7.50
10	SWITCH	1	2938	0.03	7.50

Figure3-2 online searching result of the collocation of GREEN METAPHOR (2005-2009)

		CONTEXT	FREQ	ALL	%	Mt
1		TRANSITION	3	4284	0.07	7.97
2		TOWARDS	2	3851	0.05	7.54
3		MOVEMENT	2	11216	0.02	5.99
4		CREATE	2	14673	0.01	5.61
5		309,000	1	3	33.33	10.86
6		TELLURIUM	1	5	20.00	16.12
7		RASKER	1	12	8.33	14.86
8		DAINES	1	21	4.76	14.05
9		SAVAGED	1	44	2.27	12.99
10		ARDENTLY	1	51	1.96	12.77

Figure3-3 online searching result of the collocation of GREEN METAPHOR (2010-2014)

4. Discussion

Most economic concepts are rather difficult for ordinary people to make sense, so it is as simple as possible for economic experts to name those professional terms. To express meanings unknown or abstractive among people by some well-known or detailed meanings is the most accepted way in every field. The concept of GREEN ECONOMY, which is a kind of new-born economy modal is expressed following the well-known meaning, “green”, which refers to mostly the color of grass or the leaves of most plants and trees. By the plant-relating reference, green, the character of this new economy modal is conveyed in direct way for people to understand. From this perspective, the metaphorical expression of the new economy modal, GREEN ECONOMY, could be judged as someone of ecological applicability, for the reason that it is of help for people to make sense of the new economy modal. Well-understanding of the right concept is the first step to promote those new things.

Except for the referring mostly to the color of plants, in English language “green” is used to refer to something immature as well. There are also some other common expressions, like “green-hand”. It is well-known that “green-hand” is grammatically used to refer to someone who is naive and lacking experience, especially not professional to complete the given tasks. Maybe due to the sense of being immature or not professional, to name such new economy modal as some “green” one may convey people certain meanings which is the new economy modal is not as mature as the traditional one. Although such fuel-economy had caused rather much pollution as well as productive, such economy modal is the one tested by times which had been powering the human society forward. While as to the new one “GREEN ECONOMY”, whether it could take the place of fuel economy to be the new power of the society is still a question and the answer is yet unknown. The expression of the new economy modal may bring bother to people having some thought whether the new one is as professional as possible or whether it is still some immature idea by government.

It is easy to see from the searching result (see Table 3-1). As to the expressions of judgement of the new economy, there are “I believe”, “supposed to” and “I think”. According to Halliday (1994) there are three broad functions referred as metafunctions, which are experiential metafunction, interpersonal metafunction and textual metafunction under the frame of functional grammar. As noted, interpersonal metafunction of languages is realized by Mood and Modality mainly. The personal view expressions for “GREEN ECONOMY” found in the result searched are mostly of low modality, showing that there is doubt on the right theme rather than definitive acceptance and for most people that GREEN ECONOMY may still be questionable.

Table 3-1 online searching result of the context of GREEN METAPHOR

- (f) how to build a green economy to achieve sustainable development and lift people out of poverty
- (g) I believe that the transition to a green economy is good for our economy and good for all of us
- (h) This specifically was to go out and create a green economy, and new jobs for America.
- (i) only supposed to have jobs in a wonderful new green economy with free healthcare for everybody
- (j) -- to give us a green economy. I think that's pie in the sky

For the reason mentioned above, certain name of the new economy modal could be re-expressed by some other expression causing little ambiguity as well as being of help for people to make sense of the new economic concept and further believe in it. Economic concepts are thought to be rather professional rather than some daily meanings, and it is of importance to re-express this new economic concept by some simple ones. "ECOLOGY" is someone of similar sense to "GREEN", with the sense of calling for protection of the air, water and other natural resources from the pollution or its effects (Dalgish, 2006:656). Different from "GREEN", "ECOLOGY" of little ambiguity to causing any misunderstanding. To re-express "GREEN ECONOMY" into "ECOLOGY CONOMY" is of effectiveness to avoid such ambiguity caused by "immature" sense of "GREEN" and to convey the right sense of the new economy modal, which is pushed forward to power the win-win developments of human beings and the environment. Human beings and the environment are the sub-systems of the ecology, so there is of impossibility to run for people's development at the cost of well-balanced development of the ecology.

5. Conclusion

From the perspective of economy, due to the environmental issues all around the world, economy powered by over-use of fuel or other polluting power should be taken placed by some new economic modal, like GREEN ECONOMY. That new economy modal is powered by clear energy, resulting from which as little pollution as possible would be off. To protect the earth, all around the world should promote such new economy modal. While from the ecolinguistic perspective, such metaphorical expression of the new economy modal is of some applicability to the construction of the win-win development of the human beings and the environment.

On the one hand, the sense of "GREEN" refers to the color of plants and to express the new economy modal by "GREEN" is of applicability to convey the right concept of the new modal. Through the meaning projected by "GREEN", people could make sense of the new economic concept and volunteer to promote the new economy modal. On the other hand, excepting for the plant-sense meaning, there is other sense of "GREEN", like "immature", which may cause some misunderstanding of the right economy modal when it is first to note. For people may have some doubt on the new modal due to the immature sense of "GREEN", the expression of GREEN ECONOMY is of lack of applicability to the promotion of the new economy modal. Different from "GREEN", "ECOLOGY" of little ambiguity to causing any misunderstanding. To re-express "GREEN ECONOMY" into "ECOLOGY CONOMY" is of effectiveness to avoid such ambiguity caused by "immature" sense of "GREEN" and to convey the right sense of the new economy modal, which is pushed forward to power the win-win developments of human beings and the environment.

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