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**Review of Sune Vork Steffensen, Martin Doring  
and Stephen J. Cowley (eds.). 2024. *Language as an Ecological  
Phenomenon. Language and Bioecologies in Human-Environment  
Relationships*. London: Bloomsbury**

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Due to its transversal perspective, crossing other sub disciplines, ecolinguistics provide a theoretical frame that allows including analytical tools from different nature. Ecolinguistics makes possible to think language as a better contextualised phenomena, considering a broad spectrum of implications that not only includes the enunciation context and linguistic resources. This wide range of possibilities is what makes ecolinguistics a relevant and growing field in the second decade of the 21th century. As Chomskyan and Saussurean perspectives on language are getting out-dated (Perniss 2018), the need for a bigger vision about language pushes the boundaries of linguistics towards new scientific paradigms in the context of the anthropocene deconstruction (Haraway 2016).

The relevance of ecolinguistics as a current growing field is nowadays becoming more evident not just in the quantity and quality of publications but in the topics addressed and the theoretical approaches presented; and the Bloomsbury Advances in Ecolinguistics constitute an excellent example of this multiplicity of themes and analytical devices currently in progress. At first glance it may be though that the collection of articles edited by Sune Vork Steffensen, Martin Doring and Stephen J. Cowley, *Language as an Ecological Phenomenon. Language and Bioecologies in Human-Environment Relationships* offers a set of unified eco-perspectives and analytical approaches for a better understanding of the discursive role of humans and their impact in the global ecosystem. But in itself, this book is

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much more than that; it is aimed at the linguistic, discursive and social practices in which language is imbued; and therefore, it constitutes a handbook for rethinking our human role in a multispecies environment and to reformulate it through language, discursive and social practices.

The book is divided in two parts with an introduction that serves as theoretical statement. In the introduction, titled “Ecolinguistics: Living and Languageing United” the editors introduce their perspective about the discipline and establish axes that cross and connect all the works in the heterogeneous volume, remarking the importance of the languageing perspective while aiming to re-establish the innovative thinking in the field. The introduction takes a quick tour through the history of ecolinguistics and the relations with other sub disciplines considering how languages shape human experience as they are embedded in how practices change lives and geophysical systems.

The first part focuses on theoretical issues and conceptual gaps; opening paths for future lines of research. The second part approaches empirically the issues presented in part one evidencing the material impact of ecolinguistics in discursive and social practices and vice versa.

In chapter one, Leonie Cornips investigates languageing between cows and human beings. In an interspecies languageing study, Cornips discusses a conceptual shift that can modify profoundly work on the field. The chapter starts with an elaboration of the multispecies turn in sociolinguistics stating a view of language as a continuum interspecies with no separation between humans and non-humans. The main contributions Cornips does concern the impact of human languageing on the environment and evidences the way in which companion species (Haraway 2003) are linguistically decontextualized and socially othered. The ethnographic methodology adopted allows contextualizing cow-human languageing in dairy farming practices and, thus, presenting a major area of ecolinguistic research currently in development.

The second chapter, by Sune Vork Steffensen and Edwards Baggs, approaches climate change as hyperobject (Morton 2013), linking the construction of a collective problem with a perceptual challenge. Locating ecolinguistics at the intersection of culture, cognition and behaviour, the authors emphasize the need for working for climate-friendly action or lifestyles turning to temporalities that place global change in heteroscalar and homoscalar perspectives.

In Chapter 3, Stephen J. Cowley describes how a transition from a language-use to a languageing perspective can contribute to securing life-sustaining relations. According to Cowley, languageing play an essential role in material effects that unite society, individuals and the ecosphere. The author offers a grounded constructivism where situated and embodied practices draw on languageing. Thus, language as a whole becomes a device that emerges at the intersections of practices and the ecology as humans participate in bioecologies. This entanglement places human-non-human-formations in lived-in places (Latour 1993, 2017) and leaves behind spectatorial views of the ecology.

Chapter 4, by Alexander Kravchenko, is based on the premise that human beings differ from other animals because they rely on language in doing what they do. According to Kravchenko, only humans engage in coordinations of coordinations of cooperative interactions, and by so doing, they inhabit civilizations. This position which may confront with other authors' views is justified by Kravchenko arguing that while humans have developed enlanguaged destructive social practices, they have failed to learn from them, and hence the current environmental situation. This situation calls for a re-disciplinization that treats the foundation of language as biological and, being the basis whereby brains, languages and environments co-regulate. As a result, languaging would be an adaptation to open up new ecological niches.

The first part of the volume ends with a chapter by Rasmus Gahrn-Andersenin, focused on research in traditional ecolinguistics. Acknowledging problematic dichotomies such as language and environment, Gahrn-Adersenin broaches the seldom discussed issue of sense-making in ecolinguistics. The author introduces the work of Felix Guattari to discuss how the notion of enunciative assemblage can replace Saussurian ways of analysing semantic content.

Arran Stibbe's chapter opens the second part of the volume discussing Ecolinguistics and Ethical Leadership. In considering world action, Stibbe uses the coronavirus as a starting point for reflection on the possibilities of overcoming the past pre-corona normal. He invokes effective use of words and stories that can contribute to ethical leadership and how leadership can draw on ecolinguistics. Language arises in interactions between humans and non-humans whose bio-socio-ecological relations are informed by subcutaneous ecosophies. Hitherto, the philosophical grounding has not generated a conceptual reflection on how ethical leadership can use this normative frame. In addressing the issue, he suggests that creating stories can derive their normative grounding from life-sustaining relationships.

The following chapter, by Elizabeth Oriel, Deepta Sateesh and Amal Dissanayaka, also explores social and ethical consequences of enlanguaging the world. Exploring the contexts of Sri Lanka and India, authors address problematic relationships that arise between humans and elephants. In colonial times and through later Western styles of governance, there was a loss of ancient dialogues and ways of worlding with the land's non-human inhabitants. This essentialized idea of 'land' has historically impacted negatively in many bioecologies. Separation into nature (elephants and the surrounding land) and culture (human beings and 'their' landscape) has proved detrimental to humans and elephants alike, according to the authors. Oriel, Sateesh and Dissanayaka take a multispecies or hybrid approach (Whatmore 1998) that revives lost vocabularies and allow the enlanguaging of the landscape (Mark et al. 2011) to become a place of both elephants and humans. Thus, rather than focus on symbolic framings, the authors point out how new ways of telling stories can contribute much to a symbiosis of humans and non-humans.

Alison Moore explores relationality between humans and animals in the dairy industry. She highlights the industry's use of discourses about the production of milk and other dairy products. Considering languaging as essential to humans and non-human relations, Moore tracks the environmental damage caused by the industry in terms of greenhouse emissions, health issues, and social inequalities in farming environments, genetic cow-breeding and animal welfare. Moreover, she documents the detrimental impact of dairy production for all species and many bioecologies. Adopting a systemic-functional framework, Moore offers an eco-critical deconstruction of public relation campaigns to reveal blind spots in ways that inform conversations about human and non-human relations. Extending her ecolinguistic analysis, the author proposes an ecocivilization in which not only are cows part of the worlding, but they contribute to multispecies sense making for dairy production.

Closing the volume, Chris Sinha and Vera da Silva Sinha present a way of investigating endangered languages. They take a practice-theoretical perspective by making the case for using research on endangered and local languages to benefit communities that speak those languages. Hence, protection of language or its documentation for heritage purposes should begin with attempts to understand the languaging and its linguistic life-worlds. In prioritizing ontology over epistemology, they draw on work by the anthropologist Philippe Descola (2014) which converges with ecolinguistic research. On this view, research is not about communities, ecology and languages, but about learning with communities in bioecologies. Sinha and da Silva Sinha frame this integrated perspective in terms of socioecological and political work where languages are living elements in the context of community practices.

The global concept of the volume is to empirically explore and provide new theoretical foundations for engaging with and doing ecolinguistics. Such approach emphasizes languaging rather than language, bioecologies rather than metaphorically conceived ecologies, and practice rather than representation. Editors explicitly declare that their intention is productively enhance the theoretical, methodological, and empirical scope of the discipline in terms of languaging, language practices and articulation with the more-than-human world in practical terms rather than theoretical, shifting the scope away from human and linguistic exceptionalism towards a perspective that might bring a way forward that is able to deal with the shifting materialities, livingness, vitalities and dynamics of life in what we humans reify as the environment. This way, the volume constructs a very strong bond between language and social change in terms of social practices, becoming an essential reference for linguists, discourse analysts and social scientists in general but also for activists and everyone concerned with social change in ecological terms and new ways to think the climate crisis.

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## Bionote:

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