

**IN WORDS AND IMAGES:  
INTERPRETING THE RHETORIC OF WWF UK'S AND  
GREENPEACE UK'S INSTAGRAM POSTS**

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<p>Abstrakti</p> <p>WWF ja Greenpeace ovat vanhoja ja globaalisti arvostettuja ympäristöorganisaatioita, joilla on tärkeä rooli ympäristöongelmien ratkomisessa. Organisaatiot tekevät koulutustyötä, osallistuvat politiikkaan, suojelevat biodiversiteettiä ja tuottavat uutta tietoa ympäristöstä pääasiallisesti lahjoitusvaroin ja vapaaehtoisvoimin. Varojen tulonlähde nostaa esille yleisöön vetoavan retoriikan tarpeen, jotta lahjoituksia saadaan toiminnan jatkumiseksi.</p> <p>Tämän tutkielman tavoitteena on selvittää, millaista retoriikkaa Iso-Britanniassa toimivat WWF UK ja Greenpeace UK käyttävät Instagram-julkaisuissaan aktivoidakseen mahdollisia lahjoittajia. Pyrkimyksenä on analysoida julkaisuja laadullisen sisällönanalyysin ja kuva-analyysin kautta ja selvittää, onko organisaatioiden retoriikassa eroavaisuuksia. Ympäristöorganisaatioiden retoriikan tutkiminen syventää myös ymmärrystä ekolinguistiikan tutkimusalueella, jossa kielellä nähdään olevan ratkaiseva rooli ympäristöongelmien ratkaisemisessa.</p> <p>Tulosten perusteella, Greenpeace UK ja WWF UK vaikuttavat hyödyntävän sekä kuvissa että kuvateksteissä erityisesti Aristoteleen retoriikan kolmijakoa (<i>ethos, pathos, logos</i>). Lisäksi analyysissä nousee esille monia muita retorisia keinoja, kuten retorisia kysymyksiä ja metaforia, joiden avulla organisaatiot pyrkivät herättämään lukijassa mielenkiintoa, elävöittämään julkaisuja ja tehostamaan niiden vaikuttavuutta.</p> <p>Mahdollinen jatkotutkimuskohde olisi perehtyä esimerkiksi sellaisiin julkaisuihin, jotka sisältävät useampia kuvia, sillä niihin sisältyy muun muassa mahdollisuus käyttää monipuolisemmin erilaisia retorisia keinoja. Lisäksi olisi mielenkiintoista tarkastella, muuttuuko organisaatioiden käyttämä retoriikka esimerkiksi akuuttien ympäristökriisien tai organisaatioon kohdistuvien ulkoisten tekijöiden kuten oikeuskäyntien myötä.</p>	
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# 1 INTRODUCTION

Environmental organisations have an important role in solving environmental issues. They educate people, participate in policy making, protect biodiversity and produce new knowledge about the environment. These tasks are carried out predominantly with donations and volunteer efforts, which brings up the need for appealing rhetoric. In this thesis, I compare Greenpeace UK' and WWF UK's Instagram posts' rhetoric and aim to understand how the organisations persuade people to take action on their behalf. The research topic is relevant because the ways in which environmental issues are discussed affects what kind of measures are taken to solve them (Abbamonte & Cavaliere 2022: 129). More on implications and applications can be found in section 5.1.

Greenpeace and WWF, also known as World Wide Fund for Nature, are both old and valued environmental non-governmental organisations which have similar aims but are known for differing tactics (Harvey 2011). Greenpeace is an independent environmental organisation which was established in 1971. It promotes "radical changes and new solutions to the ways we live on this planet" in order to leave a liveable planet to future generations. (Greenpeace UK n.d.). WWF is also an independent environmental organisation, and it was founded in 1961 (WWF UK n.d.; WWFa n.d.). Their goal is to stop the destruction of nature and build a world where people and wildlife can coexist. (WWFb n.d.). Besides having similar aims, both organisations are also active on various social media sites, including Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.

Instagram and Facebook, both owned by Meta, are among the most popular social media platforms worldwide (Statista A n.d.; Barber 2021: 4). Non-profit organisations, like any other businesses have also found these platforms and use them in their external communication in order "to gain support for their given causes" (Barber 2021: 2). While Facebook has more users, Instagram is more popular when it comes to picture-sharing (Barber 2021: 4). Greenpeace, in particular, has been known to prioritise photographs in their environmental campaigns (Ritch & Dodd 2018: 35;

Davis et al. 2015; Doyle 2007: 131), sometimes hiring a professional photographer to record the events (Böttger 1996, as cited by Alam et al. 2019: 7). Furthermore, non-governmental organisations' pictures are known to be used in the news regarding environmental issues, such as in the news related to The Conference of the Parties (COP) (Hansen 2017: 184). In addition to the connection to visual imagery, this thesis focuses on Instagram posts due to the nature of social media. Social media platforms like Instagram have become fundamental parts of modern communication, offering new features and ways for people to interact, share information, and engage.

This study is carried out in the framework of rhetoric, crossing the subject of ecolinguistics. Rhetoric encompasses the techniques employed by speakers aiming to sway and convince the audience of the speaker's perspective (Charteris-Black 2011: 13). Similarly, ecolinguistics examines how language shapes people's understanding of nature and environment, while putting forth the notion that language usage can play a role in either exacerbating or mitigating environmental issues (Fill 2017: 1, 3).

The aim of this thesis is to investigate how Greenpeace UK and WWF UK persuade their potential customers in their Instagram posts to support their work through action. Actions can include e.g., donating, signing a petition, or visiting their website. This thesis examines the rhetorical elements employed by both organisations, including the use of language, visual imagery, and their possible emotional appeals. Emotionality can manifest through language and visual imagery or just one of these. In addition, this thesis seeks to compare the rhetorical approaches of WWF UK and Greenpeace UK. By examining the similarities and differences in their rhetoric, the thesis aims to contribute to the existing research on environmental advocacy and social media by looking into the rhetoric used by these environmental non-governmental organisations, and in what ways they seek to engage their audiences on Instagram.

The data comprises ten Instagram posts, including five posts from each organisation. The data was gathered from the same time period, spanning from June 1st, 2022, to May 31st, 2023. The analysis of the data stems from qualitative content analysis supplemented by image analysis. More on image analysis can be found in section 2.10 and on qualitative content analysis in section 3.1. Data selection and collection is explained in section 3.2.

The research questions are as follows:

1. How are the use of language and visual imagery in WWF UK's and Greenpeace UK's Instagram posts used to persuade potential customers to take action?

2. In which ways do WWF UK's and Greenpeace UK's Instagram posts differ rhetorically?

First, I will introduce Instagram, Greenpeace, and WWF. Then, I will provide an overview of rhetoric and previous research related to these organisations. Next, I will discuss the analysis of images. In Chapter 3, I will introduce qualitative content analysis, explain the data collection and selection process, and address any ethical concerns. Chapter 4 will focus on the analysis, starting with WWF and continuing to Greenpeace. Chapter 5 will include the discussion, and finally, Chapter 6 will conclude the study.



## 2 BACKGROUND

This Chapter serves to introduce the most important concepts and terms, as well as present Instagram and the organisations in the order discussed in the introduction.

### 2.1 Instagram

Instagram, founded in 2010, is a free photo and video sharing app which is primarily used on a mobile device. Anyone who has turned 13 can create either a private or public account using an email address. (Instagram Help Centre n.d.; Lagorio-Chafkin 2012). In 2024, Instagram has over two billion active users each month (Statista B n.d.). The basic principle is that users find friends or accounts they are interested in and start following them. Users can engage with other accounts, such as view, comment, like, share or save their content depending on the privacy settings of the parties. Private people, as well as companies, are on Instagram, all presenting carefully selected parts of their lives, or brands. The photos and videos are shared in a *post* which includes an image or a video, or multiple images and videos, usually accompanied with text. From the Instagram *feed*, the user can find posts from accounts which they follow. The Instagram algorithm updates the feed constantly based on e.g., what the user likes and who they follow on Instagram but also depending on how they interact with the posts (Mosseri 2023). Hence, it is reasonable for organisations like Greenpeace and WWF to encourage users to interact with their posts through actions, such as commenting or sharing. Their activeness on Instagram can lead to more followers which means a larger pool of potential donors.

As global organisations, WWF and Greenpeace have multiple accounts on Instagram which are typically hosted by each representative country or region. Their UK-based accounts were selected for this thesis because they are close in follower numbers and present no cultural differences that would need further analysis. During the selected

time period, both Greenpeace UK and WWF UK were active on Instagram. Greenpeace posted approximately 70 posts per month on average while WWF posted approximately 30 posts per month.

The different elements of an Instagram post are presented in Figure 1 below. It is a screenshot taken on a mobile device with permission from @Saarinenphotography 's Instagram page:

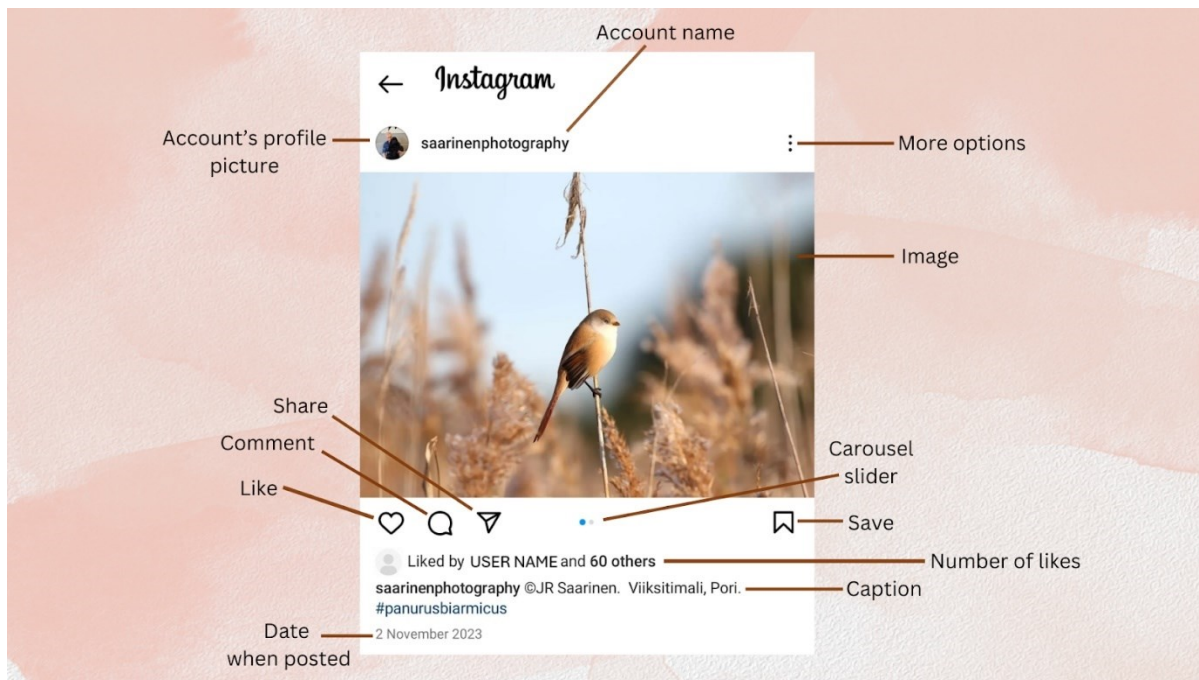


Figure 1. Structure of an Instagram post

An Instagram post typically consists of at least an image and a caption, with the possibility of including multiple images. In this thesis, the focus is on posts which include only one image and the caption. Typically, the caption is directly related to the content of the image. It may include hashtags (#), with which users can find other posts with the same theme.

## 2.2 Greenpeace

Greenpeace, founded in 1971, is an old environmental non-governmental organisation committed to preventing the “abuse of the earth’s ocean, land, air and fresh water”; other aims include protecting biodiversity, preventing pollution and ending nuclear threats (Greenpeace International b n.d; Greenpeace UK n.d.). Greenpeace operates in over 55 countries globally (Greenpeace International c n.d.). They are known for their direct but non-violent action (Abbamonte & Cavaliere 2022: 121; Eyerman & Jamison

1989: 104; Greenpeace International b n.d.), and also for targeting big corporations, such as Shell or Nestlé, directly (Abbamonte & Cavaliere 2022: 122).

Greenpeace UK is one of their national organisations. Their funding is provided via private donations and they do not accept “any funding from governments, corporations or political parties”, so they can hold environmentally destructive parties accountable for their actions. (Greenpeace UK n.d.). According to Abbamonte and Cavaliere (2022: 121), Greenpeace designs their campaigns so that the information spreads and raises people’s awareness about environmental issues in order to encourage or discourage certain actions. These include activating volunteers and raising funds.

As the organisation heavily relies on private donations, Instagram among other social media platforms (e.g., Facebook) provides opportunities in reaching potential donors. As of May 14th 2024, Greenpeace UK has approximately 425 000 followers on their Instagram account and by utilising the Instagram algorithm, they have the opportunity for expanding their reach and connecting with prospective donors to further support their mission. However, simply having a large following is insufficient without effective rhetorical strategies. This thesis explores the nuances of Greenpeace UK's and WWF UK's rhetoric, examining how they convey their messages to communicate about their mission and encourage action.

## 2.3 WWF

WWF is a valued environmental organisation founded in 1961 to protect wildlife and the surrounding communities all around the globe (WWFa n.d.; WWFd n.d.). They have offices in over 70 countries (WWFc n.d.) and they operate in nearly 100 countries. According to their website, WWF was the first organisation “to develop a science-based strategy that focuses on the links between food, climate and biodiversity loss” (WWFe n.d.). They aim to build a zero-carbon world with a sustainable food system where e.g., forests and freshwater sources are protected. One of the most well-known aspects of their work is conserving wildlife and wild habitats. (WWFd n.d.).

WWF UK is one of the parties taking part in this work. They have three offices throughout the UK. (WWFe n.d.). WWF UK receives approximately 55 percent of its income from donations and memberships. The rest they obtain from various sources, with over 20 percent received from legacies, around 15 percent from corporate donations and sponsorships, and the remainder obtained from charitable trusts, lottery promotions etc. (D&B Hoovers 2024). Similarly to Greenpeace UK, WWF UK

relies largely on private donations. They also utilise Instagram and other social media platforms, such as Facebook and YouTube, in building their brand and reaching potential donors. As of May 14th, 2024, they had approximately 347 000 followers. Much like Greenpeace UK, WWF UK also possesses the potential to reach more people if they are able to use appealing rhetoric.

## 2.4 Rhetoric

Rhetoric has its roots in ancient Greece and Rome, “as an acknowledged system of persuasive techniques” (Cockroft & Cockroft 1992: 4). According to ancient philosopher Aristotle (2000: 2), rhetoric is a study which is interested in the modes of persuasion. The word ‘rhetoric’ originally meant “persuasion in communication” (Mulholland 1994: xix) which could be why the terms ‘rhetoric’ and ‘persuasion’ are sometimes used interchangeably. Rhetoric adheres to the methods which speakers use to persuade the audience. Persuasion is the act of convincing the audience of the speaker’s point of view. (Charteris-Black 2011: 13). Aristotle recognizes three elements – means of persuading – which the speaker needs to have in order to be convincing: *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos* (Braet 1992: 309; Cockroft & Cockroft 1992: 3; Aristotle 2000: 2 Charteris-Black 2011: 7; Aristoteles et al. 2012: 196). According to Meyer (2017: 190) rhetoric is equally based on all three. *Ethos* refers to the credibility of the speaker, *pathos* to the emotions raised by the speaker’s speech and *logos* to the arguments presented in the speech (Braet 1992: 309–311, 314; Haapanen 1996: 31; Garsten 2009: 131; Aristoteles et al. 2012: 196).

*Ethos* can be split into two components: personality and stance. Personality is related to the persuader’s credibility while stance refers to aspects affecting credibility, including existing social attitudes, point of views, values or tones regarding the topic and its context. (Cockroft & Cockroft 1992: 3, 8–9). For example, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) creates credibility by collaborating globally between 195 countries (IPCC n.d.). However, a climate sceptic might not believe their reports due to pre-existing viewpoints. *Pathos* –emotions raised in the audience– could be created, for example, with linguistic word choices. In the IPCC example, these could be strong adjectives or phrases used when talking about what climate change can cause to our globe in the future. (Cockroft & Cockroft 1992: 9; Mulholland 1994: xvii). Cockroft and Cockroft (1992: 40) say that without emotion, “effective persuasion is unlikely to take place, whatever the issue involved”. The term *logos* has changed in time but nowadays it is close to what we know as arguments (Cockroft & Cockroft 1992: 10; Haapanen 1996: 31; Garsten 2009: 131).

These could e.g., be charts or calculations in an IPCC report or conclusions drawn from scientific papers.

In ancient times, rhetoric was related to spoken argumentation but after written communication became more common in the 18th century, it began to be applied to written texts as well (Heikkinen et al. 2012: 195). Rhetoric is present in language as rhetorical devices, or also known as rhetorical figures. They are linguistic tools with which ideas are expressed and readers are being persuaded, informed, and entertained (McGuigan 2011: 9). They are used in everyday language which is why they can be seen as ways of meaning (Kelen 2007: 8). Rhetorical devices include, for example, metaphors, similes, hyperboles, irony, and many other linguistic forms (Mulholland 1994; Harris 1997; Kelen 2007; McGuigan 2011).

Nowadays, the definition of rhetoric is wider and new trends in rhetoric have emerged (Brown 1993: 3–4). According to Mäntynen and Säaskilahti (2012: 196–197), a unifying factor in the field of rhetoric is that its fundamental focus is on the study of argumentation that appeals to the public. In other words, what kinds of elements are used to persuade an audience. Considering how visual elements, e.g., in advertisements are used to persuade customers to buy different products (Tom & Eves 2012: 39), it seems equally fitting that researchers have started to apply visual imagery to rhetoric (Foss 2005: 141; Hill & Helmers 2004: 2). In this thesis, I will look into visual rhetoric as well as traditional rhetoric, drawing upon Aristotle's concepts of *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*, along with various rhetorical devices.

## 2.5 Visual rhetoric

The idea of visual rhetoric is relatively new in rhetorical studies since until the 1970s the studies of rhetoric were focused exclusively on verbal language (Foss 2005: 141). DeLuca (1999: 14) says that this is a limited view of rhetoric. One of the characteristics of rhetoric is that it can be applied to a broad range of things and that it adapts to new topics (Cockroft & Cockroft 1992: 3). Nowadays, it is generally known that visual elements are used “to influence people's attitudes, opinions, and beliefs” in multiple ways (Hill & Helmers 2004: 2; Blair 2011: 205), so there is a reason to analyse visual elements and studying them has become more accepted among scholars, thus, creating the field of visual rhetoric. Foss (2005: 141) defines visual rhetoric as “the study of visual imagery within the discipline of rhetoric”. According to Foss (2004: 304, 306–7), there are two ways to define visual rhetoric and that researchers often apply it in both ways in their studies.

The first definition regards it as a visual object or artefact, which means that visual rhetoric is seen as a product which people use to communicate via visual symbols. In this instance, photographs, advertisements, or art with their colours, forms, and elements are carefully arranged to communicate things to the audience (Hill & Helmers 2004: 304–305). The second definition views visual rhetoric as a perspective on studying visual data, where researchers analyse particular aspects of the visual data, such as the aforementioned. In this definition, the idea is to focus “on the symbolic processes by which visual artifacts perform communication” (Hill & Helmers 2004: 304).

There is disagreement among rhetoricians if visual communication should be studied the same way as texts. According to McQuarrie and Mick (2003: 195), pictures can be understood as “texts composed of signs” making them a different type of text. Hill (2004: 27) does not see text as comparable to visual elements. He says the methods used in studying verbal language are not the most accurate way to study visual rhetoric as they can lead to false results. Hill continues further that concepts from these more traditional methods can still be used. This thesis aligns with the views that images and texts are not the same. However, the analysis of Instagram posts is not complete if text or pictures are left out. Still, if pictures are analysed the same way as texts, there is a possibility that something might be left out of the analysis simply because pictures and texts are different kinds of formats. Stochetti and Kukkonen (2011: 58) seem to position themselves somewhere in between. They suggest that images can be ‘read’ and those receiving the image or images “reconstruct the textual elements of persuasion while reading the image”. By recognising the connection between visual and textual elements, this thesis aims to give a more thorough understanding of the rhetorical strategies employed in the Instagram posts by the two environmental organisations.

## **2.6 Previous research on the rhetoric of Greenpeace**

Previous research on Greenpeace’s rhetoric has been conducted. For example, Brennan and Merkl-Davies (2014) have researched rhetoric used in environmental reporting in the ‘Dirty Laundry’ case which was related to a conflict between Greenpeace and six international clothing firms regarding the use of hazardous chemicals in their production. They used Aristotle’s framework of the rhetorical situation and found out that Greenpeace and the clothing firms used *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* on their rhetorical strategies through e.g., metaphors. Furthermore, in a 2013 study, Mat Nayan made a rhetorical analysis of Greenpeace’s advertising tactics, specifically focusing on their promotional YouTube video ‘Inspiring Action’, wherein

still pictures from the video were analysed using dramatic narrative lens. The study (2013: 118) found out that Greenpeace “engages its audience by depicting images that highlight humans terrorising nature that is in decay” and maintains its role as the ‘voice’ of nature. This impression is created with camera angles, fast paced music, and dark and disturbing images picturing the antagonist and protagonist at the same time.

Kattoura’s (2013) study on the Twitter dialogue between Exxonmobil and Greenpeace US applied rhetoric as well. He proposed a blended methodology which combines Kenneth Burke’s rhetorical analysis, Grace Poh Lyn’s reflexive analysis, and ideas about physical attributes of the Internet by Marshall Poe. According to Kattoura, Exxonmobil and Greenpeace share common discursive practices, meaning they “communicate about the same issues at the same or similar times using the same language for the same primary purpose—survival of the organisation—” (Kattoura 2013: v-vi).

Davis et al. (2015) studied the memes in Greenpeace’s Let’s Go! Arctic – campaign, which was against Shell’s oil-drilling plans in the Arctic. The study used legitimacy theory as their methodology base. Davis et al. (2015) discovered that Greenpeace used rhetorical techniques against Shell and that the memes included e.g., elements of irony, humour and ambiguity. And, Syfert’s Master’s thesis (2013) examines the rhetoric of eight images of Greenpeace’s staged environmental protests using DeLuca’s image event theory and Burke’s concepts of ‘identification’ and ‘disidentification’. According to Syfert (2013), Greenpeace engages in *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos* by utilising e.g., anthropocentrism and shock tactics in their images. Some pictures are also “persuasive because they appeal to concerns of human wellbeing” (Syfert 2013: 2).

The present study contributes to the knowledge of the rhetoric present in Greenpeace’s external communication, especially on Greenpeace UK’s Instagram posts. In general, studies on Greenpeace’s Instagram behaviour seem limited but a few studies exist (see next section 2.7).

## **2.7 Previous research on Greenpeace’s Instagram accounts**

To the best of my knowledge, there are no studies on Greenpeace UK’s Instagram account. A Master’s thesis by Wutzler (2019) studied the Instagram account ‘Make smthng’ which is a Greenpeace campaign on anti-consumption and sustainable consumption. The account is not one of Greenpeace’s official accounts but serves their mission all the same. The study was conducted using a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods and it found out that Greenpeace tried to reach its audience

through positivity and effortlessness, as well as with easily approachable topics such as fashion.

Most of the current research related to Greenpeace and Instagram has been done on Greenpeace Indonesia's Instagram account, mostly in Indonesian. A study by Pramana et al. (2021: 1) "aimed to identify the fantasy theme of climate crisis campaign messages" through images and narratives posted on Greenpeace Indonesia's Instagram. The study used qualitative content analysis and found three dominant fantasy themes: "(1) horrible climate crisis threat, (2) an urgent need to switch to use the renewable energy resources, and (3) issuing environmentally-friendly regulations" (2021: 1).

## **2.8 Previous research on the rhetoric of WWF**

Previous research on WWF's rhetoric is also limited. Abelen et al. (1993) have examined the rhetorical structure of eight fundraising letters sent by WWF US and eight letters by Dutch WWF. They used rhetorical structure theory and discovered that persuasive interpersonal elements occurred more often in the American letters, which were more personal and informal compared to the Dutch fundraising letters.

It seems that the visual aspects used by WWF have received greater scholarly scrutiny than its traditional rhetoric. Romberger and Scialdone-Kimberley (2011) discuss in their study how visual representations of animals used by environmental advocacy organisations such as WWF can change audiences' impressions of nature. They used ecofeminist theory combined with a visual rhetorical framework. The data consisted of three pictures of polar bear mothers from WWF, National Geographic and National Resources Defense Council. According to the study, all the pictures included greenwashing, but the images still encouraged viewers to take action "by the very fact that they promote a god's eye view of nature and imbue the viewer with power over geographical features and animals" (Romberger & Scialdone-Kimberley 2011: 48) A study by Puppini (2020) also examined visual rhetoric. The data included Chinese public service announcements, sponsored by WWF, and were analysed with visual semiotic analysis. Findings showed that the announcements contained visual metaphors, intertextual references as well as Chinese cultural elements, highlighting that culture matters in environmental protection.



## **2.9 Previous research on WWF's Instagram accounts**

Even though WWF's social media has been a research topic, not much research has been done on their Instagram accounts. A study by Meilasari (2019: 129) examines "the accuracy of cultural terms translation done by Instagram Translation Machine". She used a qualitative descriptive method. The data was in the form of phrases, which included cultural words related to the environment. The data was taken from WWF Indonesia's Instagram account. The results showed that Instagram translation machine does not provide reliable translations of Indonesian cultural terms.

Mine and Celal (2020) examined in Turkish how WWF Turkey, Greenpeace Turkey and The Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion (TEMA) apply dialogic communication ideas, public relations strategies, and interactivity in their Instagram posts. They used a two-cluster framework with the principles of dialogic communication to analyse the Instagram profiles of TEMA, Greenpeace Turkey and WWF Turkey. The results indicated that "TEMA, Greenpeace Turkey, and WWF Turkey are found to respectively cover Instagram in terms of technical and design cluster at 92%, 84%, and 88% rates" (Mine & Celal 2020: 301). They also detected that WWF Turkey was the most active of the three when responding to Instagram comments.

WWF's social media have also been studied by Netrebo (2012) who inspected how environmental challenges are created and narrated in the Facebook statuses by both Greenpeace and WWF. Quantitative content analysis was chosen as a method. It was found that Greenpeace and WWF project a different kind of worldview to their Facebook audience and that both organisations used Facebook for self-promotion.

## **2.10 Analysing images**

As is shown in sections 2.6-2.9, visibility is an essential part of analysing the rhetoric of Greenpeace and WWF. It is apparent that visibility forms an important part of their communication, which is why it is important to delve deeper into analysing images. The Instagram posts by WWF and Greenpeace include different types of images, including drawings, AI-generated imagery, and photographs. As WWF and Greenpeace are non-governmental organisations, their posts can be considered from the point of view of green advertising, which includes three types of advertising: green commercial advertising, green-washed commercial advertising and green non-profit advertising (also known as social advertising). The topics in all three advertising types

can be related to e.g., nature and wildlife conservation, animal rights issues or many other topics. The advertisements can rely more heavily on visual elements than verbal messages. (Stöckl & Molnar 2017: 267).

Green commercial advertising means promoting environmentally friendly products, whereas green-washed commercial advertising promotes products which are not environmentally friendly but claim to be such. The third type, which is the most relevant in the case of WWF and Greenpeace, is green non-profit advertising. It includes “all kinds of non-commercial campaigns aimed at raising ecological awareness and thereby calling on the recipient to support social action or adopt an eco-oriented opinion”. (Stöckl & Molnar 2017: 267). This type of advertising may utilise intentionally shocking images to construct an argument or make an appeal for action. (Stöckl & Molnar 2017: 272-273).

Images can raise emotions or do the opposite, depending on whether the viewer finds an emotional connection to the world outside the picture (Seppänen 2008: 214). Images, e.g., photographs, can provide tools for communicating things which can be hard to realise in language, and vice versa. (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2006: 19; Väliverronen 2014: 148; Seppänen 2008: 202). They can also be reflections of reality, but in a limited way as it is not known what kind of reality lies outside the image. Images can thus cover up and distort reality or have no connections to reality. (Seppänen 2008: 73).

I argue that there is no reason why photographs and animated images should be analysed differently. Even though photographs are often considered reflections of reality by the public, many scholars disagree on this view (e.g., Ledin & Machin 2018; Väliverronen MASSA 2014: 148; Seppänen 2008; Kress & Van Leeuwen 2006: 158). As Ledin and Machin (2008: 41) point out: “A photograph is not simply a neutrally recorded moment. Each photograph is a result of a number of decisions as regards things like angle, proximity, exposure, cropping, later editing and then the editorial decision to choose this particular image over another.”

According to Stochetti & Kukkonen (2011: 35), there is always a reason behind the images. For example, they can be used to illustrate the text (Seppä 2012: 147) or make an abstract issue more concrete (Seppänen 2008: 206; Väliverronen MASSA 2014: 147). Analysing images is different from analysing text as there exists no unified ‘visual grammar’ (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2006: 4; Foss 2005: 149). According to Seppänen (2008: 210-211) viewers can analyse images by simply observing them. Foss (2005: 149) agrees that images cannot “express a thesis or proposition in the way that verbal messages do; they appear to do so only because viewers attribute propositions to them”.

Image analysis can be started by first describing what is in the picture and then asking what the picture depicts (Ledin & Machin 2018: 47). The caption of the image can also provide “important clues to the ‘meaning’ of images” (Hansen 2017: 184). According to Van Leeuwen et al. (2001: 6) visual analysis can be done “based on only on what is visible within the image or collection of images”. However, Ledin and Machin (2018: 56) propose that it is useful to also ask what is missing for example, from photographs. Visual analysis has the potential to tell us what kind of social meaning(s) images create and in what ways (Ledin & Machin 2018: 15).

As previously discussed, people from different cultures can interpret e.g., images in various ways (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2006: 4–5; Seppä 2012: 230; Shi et al. 2015: 2183; Lester 2021: 61). To rephrase, we most likely make interpretations from the point of view of our own culture or the culture we are in, though, western culture tends to dominate in the field (Ledin & Machin 2018: 44). These are aspects that the researcher also needs to be aware of when analysing images. Culture is not something which can be separated from the analysis, but visual analysis can challenge these cultural viewpoints, often taken for granted (Seppänen 2008: 224).

According to Seppänen (2008: 224), in visual literacy, understanding the meaning-making mechanisms of culture and society is more important than understanding formal mastery of semiotics or the basic conventions of visual perception. However, as there still exists views on how e.g., saturations or angles could affect the interpreting of a photograph (see e.g., Ledin & Machin 2018; Lester 2021 ), I plan to combine those views to my observations of the images facilitating a more comprehensive analysis. But as Van Leeuwen (2011: 56–57) reminds, for example colours can have different meanings to various people, so I approach this issue with caution.

### **3 PRESENT STUDY**

In this Chapter, I will discuss data and methods. First, I will introduce qualitative content analysis and then continue discussing data selection, image analysis and ethics of this thesis.

#### **3.1 Qualitative content analysis**

Content analysis can be approached from a quantitative or qualitative perspective. For the purposes of this thesis, a qualitative approach was chosen. Qualitative content analysis can be understood in two ways, either as a basic analysis method, or as a loose theoretical framework (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018: 103). It can be applied to a variety of data ranging from visual elements to texts (Schreier 2012: 180). As a method, qualitative content analysis has been described as a systematic and flexible method for reducing data, and which illustrates “the meaning of qualitative data” (Schreier 2013: 170). This means that it aims to give a general, clear and concise description of the phenomena that is being researched. The aim may be to discover new phenomena, or to find new contexts or new meanings for phenomena and things which are already known. (Silvasti 2014: 37). Using content analysis, both shorter and longer documents can be examined in an organised manner, even if the material is disorganised. A document can be almost anything that is in a written form (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018: 117, 122; Silvasti 2014: 36). Given that the data includes Instagram posts, I acknowledge that while they contain both text and images, they are not exclusively textual. Therefore, I recognise the need to describe the images in a written form. In doing so, I aim to combine image analysis with qualitative content analysis to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the content.

Because of the images in the Instagram posts, for the purposes of this thesis, I considered multimodal discourse analysis. Multimodal discourse analysis has been used to “examine texts or images or images in relation to texts” (Norris 2019: 40). It approaches media pieces holistically taking into consideration for example the combination of text, image and sound (Bateman et al. 2017 : 112). But, as it often focuses on gestures, speech, still or moving images, writing and music, it has many aspects not necessary for analysing text and images (Kress 2012: 36). Qualitative content analysis mixed with image analysis has the potential to offer increased flexibility and facilitate more in-depth analysis, providing a solid foundation for examining Instagram posts. Moreover, the concept of text in multimodal discourse analysis is quite broad (Kress 2012: 36) and as there has been discussion on whether images can be interpreted similarly to texts, multimodal discourse analysis might not serve the purposes of this thesis the best. However, the decision to use content analysis mainly stems from its efficiency in handling large amounts of data as the chosen time frame included over 1000 posts.

The implementation of qualitative content analysis starts from the researcher's own interests. First, the researcher has to make a firm decision on what is interesting in the material. The topic is suggested to be specific and narrow. At this stage, it is also necessary to decide whether similarities or differences are looked for. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018: 104, 107). Then, the researcher must decide the research question or questions and select the material (Schreier 2013: 174). Next, the material is reviewed and things that fall within the scope of the researcher's interest, and align with the research question, are selected and marked. This part is also called coding the material. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018: 104; Schreier 2013: 170, 174). When coding, the data is divided into categories using a coding frame (Schreier 2013: 171; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018: 104). Often, concepts or expressions which describe a particular part or phenomenon of the data particularly well, or relate to the research questions, are chosen as codes (Silvasti 2014: 38, 44; Seppä 2012: 223).

According to Schreier (2013), content analysis requires a thorough examination of “every single part of the material that is in any way relevant to the research question.” This approach also helps to reduce the researcher's bias and preconceptions. (Schreier 2013: 171). The coding frame is tested on part of the material and if necessary, modified e.g., in terms of consistency or validity. (Schreier 2013: 171, 178–179). After this, the main analysis can be started where all the material is examined and categorised (Schreier 2013: 179). Last, conclusion of the material is written. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018: 104; Schreier 2013: 174). The outcomes of the categorisation can be used for further examination of the data, for example, to investigate the relations between the categories (Schreier 2013: 180).

It is worth noting that content analysis has been criticised for taking the data for granted making it ontologically and epistemologically ‘naive’ “ (Schreier 2013: 181). It has also been criticised for not being critical enough. However, it encourages the researcher for self-reflectivity as it requires transparency. (Seppä 2012: 229). For example, explaining the codes to the reader opens up the coding frame as well as the data for criticism which can reduce potential biases.

### 3.2 Data collection and selection

The data of this thesis includes ten posts, five from WWF and five from Greenpeace. WWF’s posts include three animated pictures and two photographs. Greenpeace’s posts include one animated picture and four photographs. To ensure systematicity, the data is within a one-year period; from 1st of June 2022 to 31st of May 2023. During the time period, WWF UK posted approximately 350 Instagram posts and Greenpeace UK approximately 800. The final ten posts left for the analysis were selected according to the following criteria, presented in Table 1:

Table 1. Codes.

Code	Description
Time frame	The posts are within 01.06.2022 - 31.05.2023.
Action	The posts must include a clear action, often indicated by a verb, e.g., ‘follow for more’, ‘comment below’, ‘visit link in bio’ etc. Posts that are too ambiguous are left out e.g., “hands up”.
Only one image	The post has only one image.
No videos	The post includes only text and an image.
No advertisements	No posts where they are hiring paid staff. No collaborative or advertising posts e.g., posts promoting a nature photographer.
No tweets	No screenshots of tweets (or X’s).
No news	No screenshots of news’ web pages.

The code ‘action’ was established based on the first research question and the idea of actions. The research questions of this thesis are typical to content analysis in a way that they compare two aspects and aim to show how they relate to each other (Seppä 2012: 218). The common element in these posts is that they encourage the audience to

act. There were multiple reasons for choosing posts with only one image. First, it is not guaranteed that the viewers scroll to the last image, making a single image more immediate in its nature. Multiple images also enable a greater amount of information which puts posts with only one image to an unequal position if they are compared. Second, there were many posts including multiple images and that makes them a research phenomenon on their own. Third, the inclusion of these types of posts would have expanded the dataset to more than 10 posts. Hence, to ensure an in-depth and qualitative examination of the selected posts, Instagram posts with multiple pictures were left out. Due to similar considerations, I also chose not to include videos in this thesis. In addition, to ensure the comparability and consistency between the research subjects, selecting the same choice of medium seemed appropriate.

Advertisements, tweets, and news were also left outside the coding frame. Advertisements, e.g., posts informing about a paid vacancy are not targeted for all viewers but to a small fraction. Excluding posts promoting, for example, a nature photographer's work guarantees that the focus remains on WWF or Greenpeace, or on both. Collaborations between Instagram accounts sometimes make it difficult to tell which account oversaw making the post, as there in most cases, does not seem to be any indication of the work division. X's, previously called tweets, were excluded from the dataset as the objective is to study Instagram posts and studying these kinds of images would tell more about the rhetoric in Twitter/X posts despite being moved to Instagram. During the data selection period, X was still called Twitter and it was undergoing rapid changes (Martin & Shah 2023) making researching it interesting but at the same time shifting the focus further away from the original intention. The same applies to screenshots of news. Also, the linguistic properties of news, and their rhetoric, has been studied previously (see e.g., White 1998; Conboy 2013; Hågvar 2019; Hermida & Mellado 2020 etc.).

These codes narrowed down the data to 256 posts from Greenpeace and 54 posts from WWF. 11 categories were found, and they are listed in Table 2:

Table 2. Categories.

Categories	Number of posts by WWF	Number of posts by Greenpeace
Comment	18	1
Competition/Giveaway	2	2
Donate	1	1
Event	4	21
Follow	-	1
Link in bio	14	133
Providing information	6	-
Save this post	4	-
Share	4	5
Sign a petition	-	112
Tune in	1	-
<b>Total number</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>276</b>

When selecting posts for analysis, emphasis was placed on samples derived from the most prominent and substantial categories. The posts were chosen from the categories with the greatest number of posts and from the ones which were unique to the account. In the case of WWF, they were ‘comment’, ‘link in bio’, ‘providing information’ and ‘save this post’. Two posts were taken from the largest category and one from the rest.

Greenpeace had approximately five times the number of posts compared to WWF, so the selection process varied slightly. The most extensive categories had 133 (‘link in bio’) and 112 (‘sign a petition’) posts which is more posts than WWF had altogether. I decided to take two posts from the two biggest categories due to the large number of posts and their representativeness and one post from the ‘event’ category which was the third largest category. The other option was to take one from the ‘follow’ category which was unique to Greenpeace but as it had only one post its scholarly value seemed minimal. Thus, the chosen categories were ‘link in bio’, ‘sign a petition’ and ‘event’. Five posts were chosen from Greenpeace which makes a total of 10 posts.

Using randomisation for selecting the posts was considered but there is a possibility that it would bring forth posts which have sparse textual content, or their images lack sufficient diversity and representativeness. For example, as a result of randomisation the data might include five cute animal pictures from WWF, when in reality their content is more diverse. The aforementioned aspects would pose challenges to the analytical process, hindering comprehensive understanding and interpretation.



Purposeful choosing of the data according to pre-set criteria means that analysing these Instagram accounts will be subjective and limited generalisations can be made from the data, but it also facilitates a more thorough understanding of the research topic. According to Seppä (2012: 219), when defining the relationship between the research topic and the image data, it is not unprecedented for content analysts to emphasise the representativeness and relevance of the data, i.e. the images selected for the research must be suitable to represent the issue or phenomenon that the research is intended to analyse.

### 3.3 Ethics

According to Rose (2012: 339), the copyright of an image typically belongs to its creator. Under the principle of 'fair use', it is permissible to use copyrighted material for research purposes (Copyright Alliance 2016). Thus, analysing WWF's and Greenpeace's posts does not present any ethical concerns regarding copyright. However, as a demonstration of good scientific practice, I sent both @wwf\_uk and @greenpeaceuk an Instagram message informing them of my intention of using their posts in my Master thesis' analysis. I provided them details about the university, the topic of my thesis and where the thesis will be published once completed. This approach ensures transparency and respects the rights of the content creators while aligning with ethical research practices. @Greenpeaceuk gave permission on the same day asking to give them credit when due. After a few days, I sent an email to WWF UK to which they replied that I was free to use their posts in my thesis.

According to Franzke et al. (2020: 54–55), companies are not to be treated as people but because private individuals are in relation to them, some ethical considerations are necessary. They suggest that the data related to individuals should be minimised. For this reason, and because they were deemed irrelevant to the analysis, the comments were blacked out. This approach protects the privacy of the commenters. Even if they post publicly, not all are aware their comments might end up as data. Last, in cases where the name of the photographer or creator was known, it was duly included in the analysis.

## **4 ANALYSIS**

In this Chapter, I will analyse chosen data, starting from WWF UK and continuing to Greenpeace UK. In the end, I will provide a summary of the analysis.

### **4.1 Analysis of WWF UK**

In this section, I will focus on analysing the five selected posts from WWF UK, keeping in mind Aristotle's *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*, as well as rhetorical devices presented e.g., by Harris (1992; 2018) and McGuigan (2011). I begin with the category 'link in bio' which is shared by both WWF UK and Greenpeace UK, followed by the categories of 'save this post', 'comment' and 'providing information'.

#### 4.1.1 Link in bio: Koalas

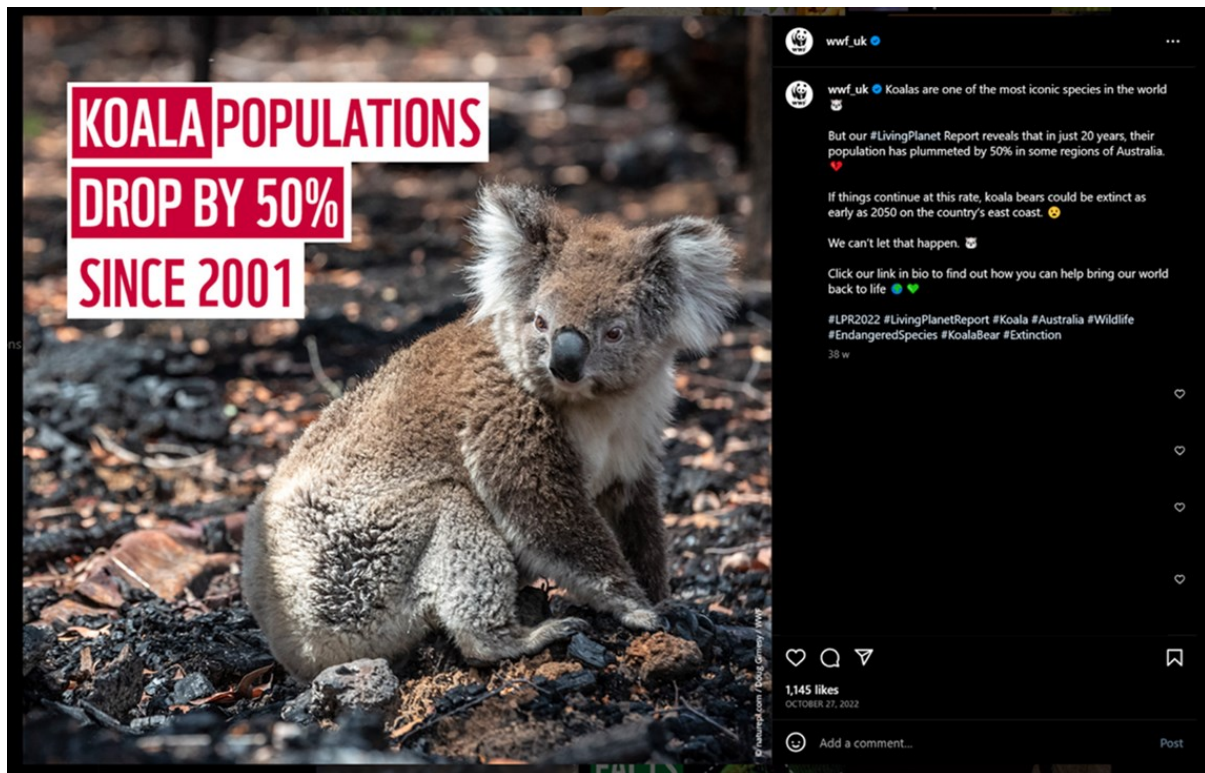


Figure 2. WWF UK's Instagram post 'Link in bio: Koalas'

The post from October 27th, 2022, includes an image of a Koala sitting in the ground. At the top left corner there is a large text on a white and red font which says: "Koala populations drop by 50% since 2001" (Figure 2). According to Lester (2021: 39), red is used to signal a warning or to get the attention because humans recognise the colour quickly. So, the colour of the text as well as the meaning already tell the viewer that something is wrong, and so does the image. In the image, the koala is sitting on a black and brown ground which looks burnt, suggesting forest fires. This is alarming because koalas are arboreal, which means they are adapted to living in trees and usually climb to the ground to move from one tree to another (Queensland government 2023).

The eye-catching image text describes the distressing state of the koala populations, while the lifeless, muted colours in the image, the absence of trees, and the koala's posture all contribute to evoking *pathos* in the viewer. This combination may lead viewers to worry about the fate of the koalas, particularly the one in the image. According to Ledin and Machin (2018: 54), having an individual in the image instead of a group adds to the effect of considering matters from the individual's point of view. This can be enhanced by the setting. The focus within this image is centred on the animal with minimal complementing elements. In addition, the koala stands out due to the sunlight directly shining upon it.

*Pathos* continues in the text as well:

Koalas are one of the most iconic species in the world 🐨

But our #LivingPlanet Report reveals that in just 20 years their population has plummeted by 50% in some regions of Australia. 💔

If things continue at this rate, koala bears could be extinct as early as 2050 on the country's east coast. 😞

We can't let that happen. 🐨

Click our link in bio to find out how you can help bring our world back to life. 🌍💚

#LPR2022 #LivingPlanetReport #Koala #Australia #Wildlife #EndangeredSpecies  
#KoalaBear #Extinction

*Pathos* is created in several ways. Perhaps the most prominent is the use of emojis in this text. The broken heart emoji and the yellow face emoji, looking disappointed or in disbelief, convey to the reader how they should feel about the news. A sad future without koalas is painted with words such as 'extinction' and 'endangered'. A glimpse of hope is given in the last sentence when they encourage the reader to take action by clicking the link in bio in order to help the world. The metonymic phrase "bring our world back to life" compares the state of the world to being dead. While this may initially seem to suggest that the world's vitality is dependent on the survival of koalas, it also invites the reader to consider the broader issue of biodiversity loss and extinction risk facing other species. This can strengthen the reader's sense of duty. According to McGuigan (2011: 149), *metonymies* allow writers to "refer to something closely related to the actual object, and use that as a way of referring to the object itself". In addition, metonymies invite the reader to consider familiar ideas from a new perspective (McGuigan 2011: 150).

The post relies heavily on *pathos* but it also establishes *ethos* by referring to the Living Planet Report on a few occasions. Though, more knowledgeable readers know that the Living Planet Report is made by WWF (WWF EU n.d.). For some, this may increase its credibility and to others may decrease it. *Ethos* may also increase if the reader considers who has taken the photograph. If they think someone from WWF took the picture, that can establish an impression whereby WWF is perceived as possessing a diverse array of competencies. This can potentially create *ethos* within the viewer. In fact, the photograph was taken by Doug Gimesy, and it was originally a stock photo on [www.naturepl.com](http://www.naturepl.com) and for which WWF bought the licence (Naturepl.com B). If the viewer realises the connection to the stock website, this may decrease *ethos*. From Aristotle's rhetoric, *logos* is distinct as well in the mention of the 50 per cent population

decline of koalas in some regions of Australia. This provides statistical evidence of the severity of the situation, appealing to the readers' sense of reason.

The post belongs to the 'link in bio' category, which means the content creator, Greenpeace in this instance, has added a hyperlink to their profile's bio section which they want the reader to follow. As of May 2024, Instagram does not allow clickable links on the posts, so content creators usually advise their followers to go to the creator's bio section to find the link. These links may change frequently and usually only the link related to the latest post is available. So, due to the timeline of the data, it is impossible to determine the destination of the link unless it is discussed in the caption, as it is no longer accessible. In posts belonging to the 'link in bio' category, the links are not discussed in the caption and thus cannot be analysed but merely speculated upon.

#### 4.1.2 Save this post: Bees

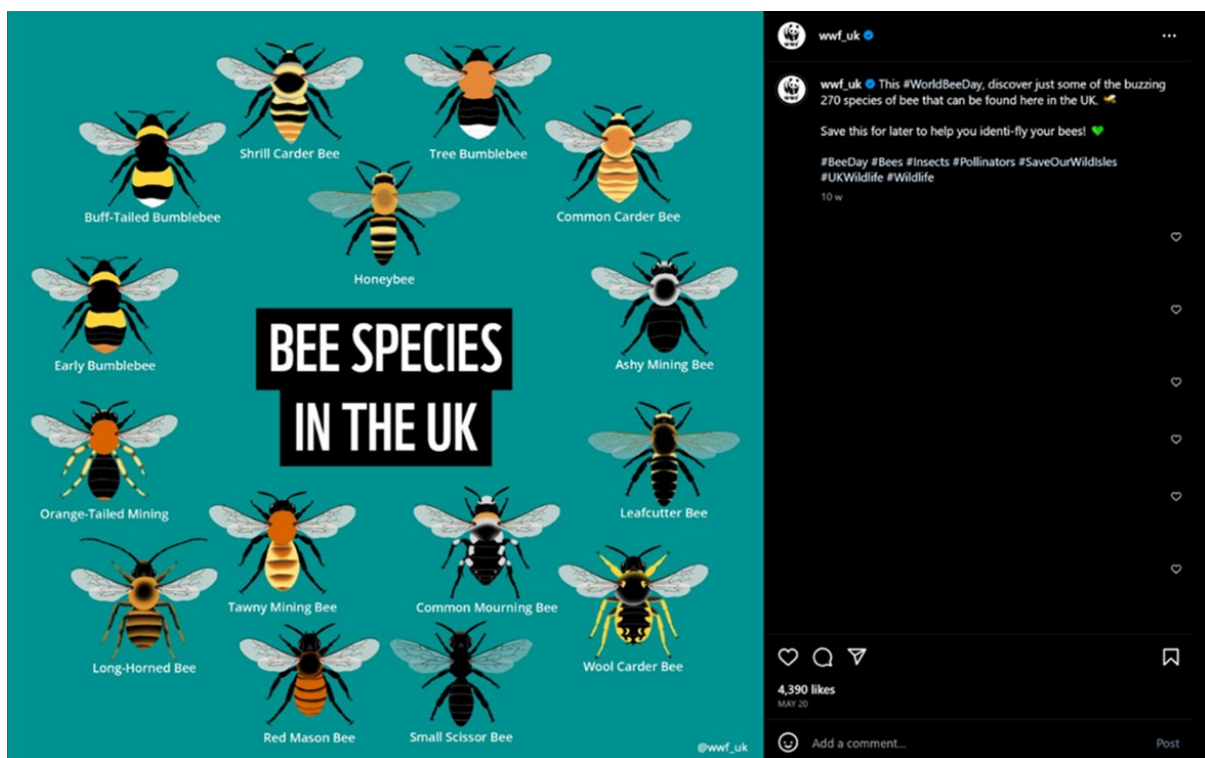


Figure 3. WWF UK's Instagram post 'Save this post : Bees'

The post from May 20th, 2023, is related to the United Nations' World Bee Day. The image has 15 different animated bee species in what looks like a circular heart shape. The action in this post is to save the post for later use. It can be taken literally, meaning that people should save the post so that they can identify the different bee species later based on the image. WWF may also want the reader to save the post on Instagram, so the next time they scroll through their saved posts, they see it and remember WWF's

existence. Or more likely, it is because the Instagram algorithm monitors how users save posts and suggests more similar content to their feeds (Instagram blog 2023).

The heart shape in the image may have been added with the intention of creating positive emotions towards bees. This can be considered as creating *pathos*. In the middle of the image there is white text on a black background and it says: "BEE SPECIES IN THE UK". (Figure 3) It is also positioned in a way that emphasises the shape of a heart. The English species names are listed below each bee. This strengthens WWF's *ethos*, especially its personality because it gives an impression of expertise in the study of bees.

All the bees have their wings open, which makes them look like a swarm of flying, colourful bees, or depending on one's stance, dead ones in a collector's collection. The last effect is lessened by the colour of the background. The bees are in front of a monochromatic turquoise background which was possibly chosen because it looks harmonious with the other colours of the image (orange, yellow, brown, white, grey, black). The biggest and fuzziest bees are on the left and top of the picture. Slimmer, darker-coloured bees which look more like the general depiction of the archetype of insects are on the bottom and right. The positioning of the bees might also have been considered to increase *pathos* as bumble bees, which are placed on the top of the image, have a 'cuter' reputation than other insects (King 2012: 42). In addition, in most western countries text is read from left to right, following the text from up to down, which makes the viewer most likely to see the plumpest bees first. On the bottom right corner there is the Instagram account's name '@wwf\_uk' as an indication of the author. This also enhances the expert impression of WWF UK.

The rhetorical elements of the image continue in the caption, which goes as follows:

This #WorldBeeDay, discover just some of the buzzing 270 species of bee that can be found here in the UK. 🐝 Save this for later to identi-fly your bees! ❤️ #BeeDay #Bees #Insects #Pollinators #SaveOurWildIsles #UKWildlife #Wildlife

The most conspicuous section in the caption above is perhaps the *wordplay* 'identi-fly', combining the word identify and fly. According to Cockcroft and Cockcroft (1992: 126), puns and wordplay can be used to indicate *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*. Prominent is also the *onomatopoeia* in the word 'buzzing'. Onomatopoeia is a rhetorical device which refers to words whose pronunciation mimics the sounds they represent (Cockcroft & Cockcroft 1992: 152; Harris 1997: 49). It can be used to liven up a sentence (Harris 1997: 50). In this case it could be used to further emphasise the 'cuteness' of the flying bees. The colour green is generally associated with nature, so the green heart emoji



highlights a connection between the bees and the environment. The bee emoji may be used because it is visually pleasing (just as the green heart may be) but it can also be there to accentuate the cuteness of the bees and thus increase *pathos*.

The hashtag #SaveOurWildIsles is most likely a reference to the nature documentary Saving Our Wild Isles (2023) which was commissioned by The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, National Trust and WWF (BBC 2023). The intention may be to promote the documentary, but it can also have a purpose in building positive rhetoric towards bees. For example, the hashtag in question may be used to evoke *pathos* as it induces a sense of threat, creating a need to save the wild isles from something, as well as urgency towards saving the wild isles. And not just any wild isles but ‘our’ wild isles, making the reader focus on what the wild isles mean to them personally. In current environmental discourse, notable attention is given to the consideration of future generations. In these discussions, the state of ecosystems, such as those of wild isles, is in a key position. In maintaining healthy ecosystems, bees have a crucial role in pollination (King 2012: 42) making them vital to wild isles too.

#### 4.1.3 Comment: Water



Figure 4. WWF UK's Instagram post 'Comment : Water'

The post from August 1st, 2022, is an infographic which gives the readers tips on how to save water using pictures of practical items. All the items in the image are placed on a deep blue background, reminding the viewer of water. Behind the items there are altogether thirteen lighter blue circles which remind of bubbles. The bubble-like circles amplify the connection to water and, according to Lester (2012: 49), may be used to captivate the viewer's attention.

First, the viewer's attention is drawn to the top left of the animated image, where white text says: "FIVE WATER SAVING TIPS" (Figure 4). Starting from the top there is a picture of what appears to be a wooden toothbrush with a green end, and white and blue toothpaste on it. On its right there is the first water saving tip: "Turn the tap off in between toothbrush rinses" (Figure 4). The toothbrush might have been chosen to appear wooden as e.g., bamboo toothbrushes have a lower environmental impact than plastic ones (Ishii et al. 2023: 23). This introduces the general underlying theme of sustainability and might appeal to the stance of viewers who are already making environmentally conscious choices in their daily routines.

Below the toothbrush there are five, white plates and a blue mug. On its top right there is text saying: "Make sure your dishwasher is full" (Figure 4). On the left of the plates, there is a grey shower head leaning towards the left and below it a text that suggests to "Switch from baths to showers" (Figure 4). Below the showerhead there is a green watering can and on its left a text which asks you to: "Water your plants using left over cooking water or install a water butt" (Figure 4). Last, on the bottom right of the image there is a grey tap with a darker grey handle and a drop of water coming out of the spout. Below the tap, there is the last water saving tip which says: "Fix any leaky taps or toilets" (Figure 4). Again, on the bottom left of the image there is the account signature '@wwf\_uk' which potentially increases WWF's *ethos*.

Notably, all the water saving tips are arranged from least effort to most effort; it is easier to turn the tap off than fix a toilet. If the order was different, it might give the impression that saving water is too difficult. By arranging the tips in this order, WWF tries to show that it can be effortless.

The shower head, the mug, the watering can, and the tap all look shiny. This gives the impression that they are made of metal, or other lasting material. This purposeful visual choice emphasises the theme of environmental responsibility which is present in the practical water saving tips. This might appeal to the viewer's existing views regarding sustainability. The tips are also a concrete solution to saving water which might appeal to the *logos* side of the reader. The imperative form of the tips reinforces their effectiveness in encouraging action based on logic.



However, the main purpose of the image seems to be to focus the attention to the caption which goes as follows:

“Did you know, the average person in the UK uses around 150 litres of water every day?  
😞💧

However, it’s estimated that we only need 20-50 litres per day for our basic drinking, cooking & cleaning needs!

As the UK experiences drought conditions, it’s more important than ever that we reduce our water consumption, both to help our freshwater species & spaces thrive, and to preserve water supplies for future generations.

Using less water at home is an easy change we can all make. Check out our five water saving tips and add your own in the comments below! 🙌💙

#UKHeatwave #UKDrought #Drought #HosepipeBan #JourneyOfWater #Water #WaterSaving #SaveWater #WaterScarcity #Ecotips “

The caption begins with a *rhetorical question* focusing the reader’s attention to a statistical figure related to water usage in the United Kingdom. Rhetorical question is a rhetorical device used to emphasise important information. They are usually questions which can be answered with a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’. (McGuigan 2011: 34–35). While the question strengthens *logos*, as it gives a reason for water saving, at the same time it weakens it because WWF does not mention where they got the numbers from. This also lessens their personality’s credibility (*ethos*). Then the post proceeds to tell how much water people in the UK would really need, giving another reason to look at one’s water consumption. Nevertheless, the absence of proper citation once more compromises the author’s *ethos* and decreases *logos*.

The third paragraph appeals to the reader’s *pathos* with phrases such as “more important than ever”, “to help” and “for future generations”. (Figure 4). By emphasising the impact on species, spaces, and future generations, the text aims to evoke sympathy and concern among readers, encouraging them to save water. In the last sentence, WWF asks the reader to add their own water saving tips to the comment section. This may be because the Instagram algorithm interprets this as interest in seeing posts from this account and of this theme (Mosseri 2023). It can also be that WWF just genuinely wants people to save water and give tips the organisation has not already shared.

#### 4.1.4 Comment: Big cats



Figure 5. WWF UK's Instagram post 'Comment : Big Cats'

The post from August 8th, 2022, also belongs to the 'comment' category. It is related to the international cat day which was "created by the International Fund for Animal Welfare in 2002" (Green 2014). The image pictures five big cats (Lion, Snow Leopard, Amur Leopard, Tiger and Jaguar) against a green background. The green again reminds of nature which fits the context since these big cats live in tropical forests, grasslands etc. At the top left of the image a headline says "International cat day" in bold letters (Figure 5). On the top right corner there is the WWF's account tag, which has been discussed in earlier posts.

Of all the cats, the amur leopard is the only one watching back. This aspect is intriguing given that the amur leopard is the only one which is marked as critically endangered. It raises a question whether this was done deliberately. It creates the feeling that the amur leopard is sort of looking to the past actions of humans that have contributed to this situation. Though, this interpretation is anthropomorphic and should be approached with caution. Next to the headline there is a picture of an animated lion. The rest of the animated cats are depicted below the lion, and each species has their English name written on top of their backside. Like in the bee post, in this instance too, the written names give an expert view of WWF. Especially, because on the frontside, near the cats' front paws each cat has either a creamy white, a yellow, an orange or a red dot which illustrates their global conservation status. On

the bottom of the image there is a smaller text which says, “global conservation status” and below it there are all four dots in line with explanations next to them. Red is for ‘critically endangered’, orange for ‘endangered’, yellow for ‘vulnerable’ and creamy white for ‘near threatened’. Even though the name International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is not mentioned anywhere on the post, for knowledgeable readers or biology students, it is evident that the statuses are taken from IUCN’s Red List of Threatened Species which is “the world’s most comprehensive information source on the global extinction risk status of animal, fungus and plant species” (The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species n.d.). Using the IUCN’s conservation categorisation, WWF builds their personality but only if the reader knows the connection to the red list and trusts IUCN. If the reader knows that WWF was founded by the help of IUCN (WWFa n.d.), then it might also build the *ethos* of IUCN, presuming that they trust WWF as an authority.

The animation style of the cats is simplified. The cats do not exhibit any evident signs of aggression, such as bared teeth or an arched back. On the contrary, the cats have a relaxed standing or walking posture resembling domestic cats. However, this interpretation can be questioned, since after all, these big cats as well as the domestic house cats belong to the Felidae family sharing a lot of similarities between them. Nonetheless, if the viewer has made the connection to house cats, the dots next to their paws can look like toys or balls of yarn increasing the similarity to house cats. Presuming the viewer is familiar with house cats, this can increase the *pathos*, creating a need to protect these big cats.

After examining the image, the viewer’s attention shifts to the caption:

“It’s #InternationalCatDay today and we’re celebrating these majestic big cats. 🐾

Sadly, many face risk of extinction - from stripey tigers 🐅 to rare Amur leopards 🐆

Do you have a favourite big cat? Let us know in the comments below 🙋

#InternationalCatDay #BigCats #Wildlife #LoveBigCats #Tiger #Lion #AmurLeopard  
#SnowLeopard #Cheetah #CatsOfInstagram”

In this short text, there are a few rhetorical devices. First, the word ‘majestic’ which is used to describe the big cats can be understood as an *epithet*. The rhetorical device, epithet, is a descriptive adjective or an adjective phrase which is used to bring a scene to life or evoke a particular idea or emotion “ (Harris 2018: 133; McGuigan 2011:133 ; Harris 1997: 42). The usage of the word majestic in this context could be because a lion is often called ‘the king of the jungle’. “Stripey tigers” and “rare Amur leopards” are also epithets (Figure 5).

The last two are also *exemplums*; rhetorical devices which visualise or concretise the subject to the reader (Harris 2018: 51). The hashtag #Cheetah could be categorised as an exemplum since cheetahs are equally vulnerable big cats. (IUCN Red List). The text also aims to create *pathos* with the cat emoji “🐱” as well as with the hashtags “#LoveBigCats” and “#CatsOfInstagram”. (Figure 5). The last one is popular among cat owners with more than 200 million posts under the hashtag. This further establishes a connection between big cats and domestic cats, mirroring the depicted relationship in the image. In the last sentence, WWF asks the reader to take action by asking them to comment their favourite big cat below. The pointing-down finger emoji serves as a visual cue, reminding the reader to look at the comment section and engage with their content.

#### 4.1.5 Providing information: Jaguar

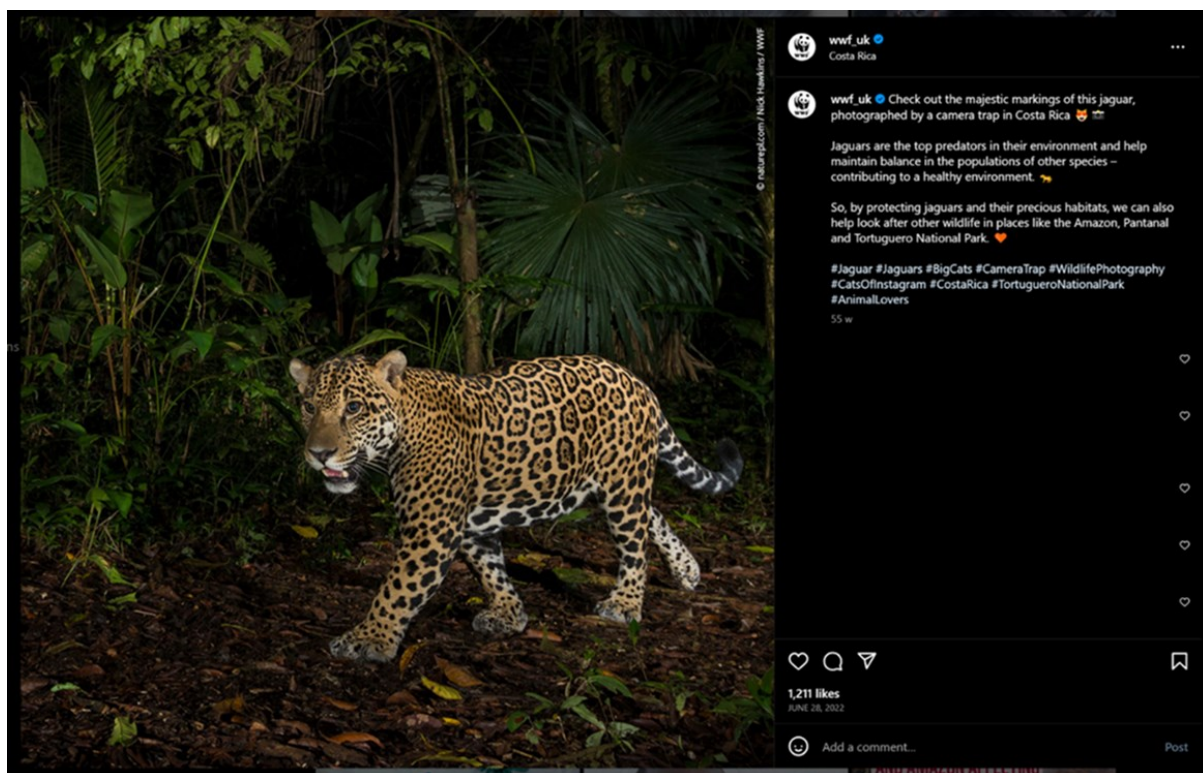


Figure 6. WWF UK’s Instagram post ‘Providing information : Jaguar’

The post from June 28th, 2022, has a photograph of a jaguar in Costa Rica. The photograph was taken by Nick Hawkins, and it was originally a stock photo on [www.naturepl.com](http://www.naturepl.com) and for which WWF bought the licence (Naturepl.com A). As in the koala post, in this instance too, the viewer does not necessarily make the connection between the stock website and WWF, so *ethos* may increase, if the viewer perceives WWF as a versatile company with many areas of expertise, such as photography.



The caption tells the reader that the photograph was taken by a camera trap. It is quite dark in the picture, so it was probably taken during the night. In the image, a jaguar is walking from right to left in a dark rainforest. The cat looks vigilant with its wide eyes, open mouth and bared front teeth. There are no humans in the image, but their presence is still palpable since someone put the camera trap in the forest. Then there is the leafy path on which the jaguar is walking. The viewer may wonder whether it was the result of humans or animals.

According to Ledin and Machin (2018: 60), viewers become more engaged with the object in the photo if it is seen from the front and not from the side angle. Thus, the angle of the jaguar and the simple dark background combined shift the attention to the jaguar. Similarly to the koala post, in this image as well, the focus is centred on the animal with minimal complementing elements.

This post is categorised under ‘Providing information’ because WWF does not ask anything directly from the viewer. In these types of posts, it seems the organisation’s objective is to give an example of the type of conservation work they do. The post serves as a tangible example, appealing especially to those who are already donating to WWF or are considering donating because this way the readers get a better understanding of the possible purposes for their money. This transparency can potentially enhance *logos* because it provides concrete proof of WWF’s conservation efforts. With these types of posts, WWF seems to be building their personality as a trustworthy and transparent organisation.

The image seems to serve a purpose of strengthening the rhetoric of the caption:

Check out the majestic markings of this jaguar, photographed by a camera trap in Costa Rica. 🐆📷

Jaguars are the top predators in their environment and help maintain balance in the populations of other species -contributing to a healthy environment. 🐾

So, by protecting jaguars and their precious habitats, we can also help look after other wildlife in places like the Amazon, Pantanal and Tortuguero National Park. ❤️

#Jaguar #Jaguars #BigCats #CameraTrap #WildlifePhotography #CatsOfInstagram #CostaRica #TortugueroNationalPark #AnimalLovers

The text aims to highlight the importance of protecting jaguars and their ecosystems. First, an impression of value is created with the *alliteration* and figurative epithet “majestic markings” (Figure 6). According to Harris (2018: 157), alliteration is a rhetorical device which involves the repetition of similar sounds “at the beginning of

successive words”. Using alliteration in a text can help readers to remember key concepts (Harris 2018: 158). As discussed in section 4.1.4, the word choice ‘majestic’ may have been selected because lions are sometimes referred to as ‘the king of the jungle’. Therefore, extending this association to other big cats such as jaguars is not difficult to make. This portrays the jaguar as something regal and worthy of protecting.

Next, concrete reasons for their protection are given. This appeals to the *logos* of the reader, as does the exemplum in the next paragraph where the caption tells the reader that by protecting jaguars also other wildlife and other places, such as the Amazon, are protected. Exemplums, also referred to as examples, “often include the visual, concrete, specific details that a reader can see in the mind’s eye “ (Harris 2018: 51). Last, among the hashtags there is again the “#CatsOfInstagram” (Figure 6) which could be there simply due to its popularity on Instagram, or it could be used to establish a connection to domestic cats, aiming to evoke *pathos* in the reader. As discussed previously, *pathos* may also be attempted to be evoked with the heart emoji and the cat emoji with heart-shaped eyes.

#### 4.1.6 Summary of WWF UK’s Instagram posts

Despite belonging to different categories, all selected posts seem educational and discuss current environmental issues without going too deeply into their root causes. By staying relatively neutral and maintaining a polite tone, it seems WWF UK endeavours to appeal to a broad demographic. It is clear that Aristotle’s rhetoric is strongly present in these posts, with three posts including *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*. Several rhetorical devices are also present in the posts, depicted in the Table 3 below:

Table 3. Rhetorical elements in WWF UK’s Instagram posts.

WWF UK's posts	Rhetorical elements
Link in bio: Koalas	Ethos, Pathos, Logos, Metonymy
Save this post: Bees	Ethos, Pathos, Onomatopoeia, Wordplay
Comment: Water	Ethos, Pathos, Logos, Rhetorical question
Comment: Big cats	Ethos, Pathos, Epithet, Exemplum
Providing information: Jaguar	Ethos, Pathos, Logos, Alliteration, Exemplum

## 4.2 Analysis of Greenpeace

Transitioning the focus to Greenpeace, in this section, I will first examine the shared category 'link in bio', and then proceed to analyse 'sign the petition' and 'event' categories mirroring the structure established in the analysis dedicated to WWF.

### 4.2.1 Link in bio: Shell




Figure 7. Greenpeace UK's Instagram post 'Link in bio: Shell'

The post by Greenpeace from February 2nd, 2023, is related to the oil company Shell and their profit making. At the centre of the image there is a white gas price sign by Shell, featuring their yellow- and red-coloured logo at the top. Below it where the gas prices usually are, a text says: "2022 Profits £32,2 BN. Payment For Climate Damage £?" (Figure 7). The last phrase includes a rhetorical question. When the interrogative word is missing, the question mark takes its place. Greenpeace is not expecting Shell to answer to how much they pay for the climate damage they have caused. Rather, by sharing Shell's profits they try to showcase Shell's vast profits and their equally large effect on climate.

Below the rhetorical question, there is a text which can also be found in the caption. It asks to: “STOP DRILLING. START PAYING.” (Figure 7) This request includes alliteration which was discussed in the jaguar post (by WWF). It also includes *parallelism*, which means presenting ideas of equal importance in a text using a similar kind of syntactical structure in one or multiple sentences, bringing balance and rhythm to the text (Harris 1997: 10; McGuigan 2011: 93; Harris 2018: 5–6).

On the left of the gas price sign, there is a person looking at it, wearing a black beanie and a safety jacket which says ‘Greenpeace’ on the back. Behind the sign, there is a brown building in the midst of construction. The bottom part of the building looks industrial. The lighting in the image suggests it is either late evening or early morning, given its darkness. Positioned in the upper-left corner is a leafless tree, contributing to the overall dark tone of the scene. At the bottom of the image, a yellow and red text proclaims: “SHELL JUST ANNOUNCED RECORD ANNUAL PROFITS - SO WE SENT THEM A MESSAGE” (Figure 7). Greenpeace aims to build credibility (*ethos*) through the image. The photograph, likely featuring a Greenpeace volunteer, along with the accompanying text, portrays Greenpeace as an organisation unafraid to take action. Notable is the use of ‘we’ in the phrase “we sent them a message” (Figure 7) which reflects their community-oriented approach.

This approach is reflected in the caption as well:

 BREAKING: Shell has just announced eye watering annual profits of over 32 BILLION - so we paid their HQ a visit to deliver a message: STOP DRILLING, START PAYING.

Four brave @Greenpeace activists are currently occupying a critical piece of Shell’s climate wrecking equipment in the middle of the ocean. They’ve delivered the same simple message to Shell at sea - so now we need you to send it to Shell online.

Tell Shell to Stop Drilling and Start Paying by messaging them on LinkedIn  Click link in bio @greenpeaceuk

The siren light emoji at the beginning may participate in creating *pathos* in the reader, signalling that the issue is urgent and important. In the first sentence, they use a *hyperbole* “eye-watering” (Figure 7) which emphasises the enormity of Shell’s annual profits. According to Harris (1997: 39; 2018: 32), hyperbole is a powerful but overused rhetorical device which should be used with consideration. McGuigan (2011: 20) defines hyperbole as the deliberate exaggeration of a particular aspect of a statement, emphasising that it is never intended to be taken literally by the reader. Some might perceive ‘climate wrecking equipment’ as hyperbolic too, while to others, it may resonate as a truth rather than an exaggeration. It is also metaphorical in a sense that the equipment cannot literally wreck the climate. The problem is not the equipment itself but what results from using it, and what the end product is used for e.g., crude



oil is used for fuel oils which are considered fossil fuels (Statistics Finland n.d.). Those are destroying the climate.

The caption aims to portray Shell as the antagonist and Greenpeace as the active protagonist. Through showcasing their actions, they seek to enhance their personality (*ethos*) and by urging the audience to message Shell's LinkedIn page, they also aim to increase the reader engagement. This approach is drastically different when compared to WWF, who typically refrains from directly assigning blame to individual companies. Directly addressing the company can increase the perception of Greenpeace as an organisation that keeps its commitments, thereby enhancing its personality. Though, this may also have an opposite effect if calling out is perceived as being too aggressive.

The post falls under the 'sign a petition' category. Like with WWF, in the case of Greenpeace as well, there is no certainty of what occurs after clicking the link in the bio. This is because the links are changed frequently and at the time of data collection, all the links associated with the selected posts had been removed, leaving the readers wondering what would have happened had they clicked the link. In this case, it could be that the link directs the reader to Shell's LinkedIn page or to Greenpeace's own website where they discuss e.g., fossil fuels.

#### 4.2.2 Link in bio: Coca-Cola

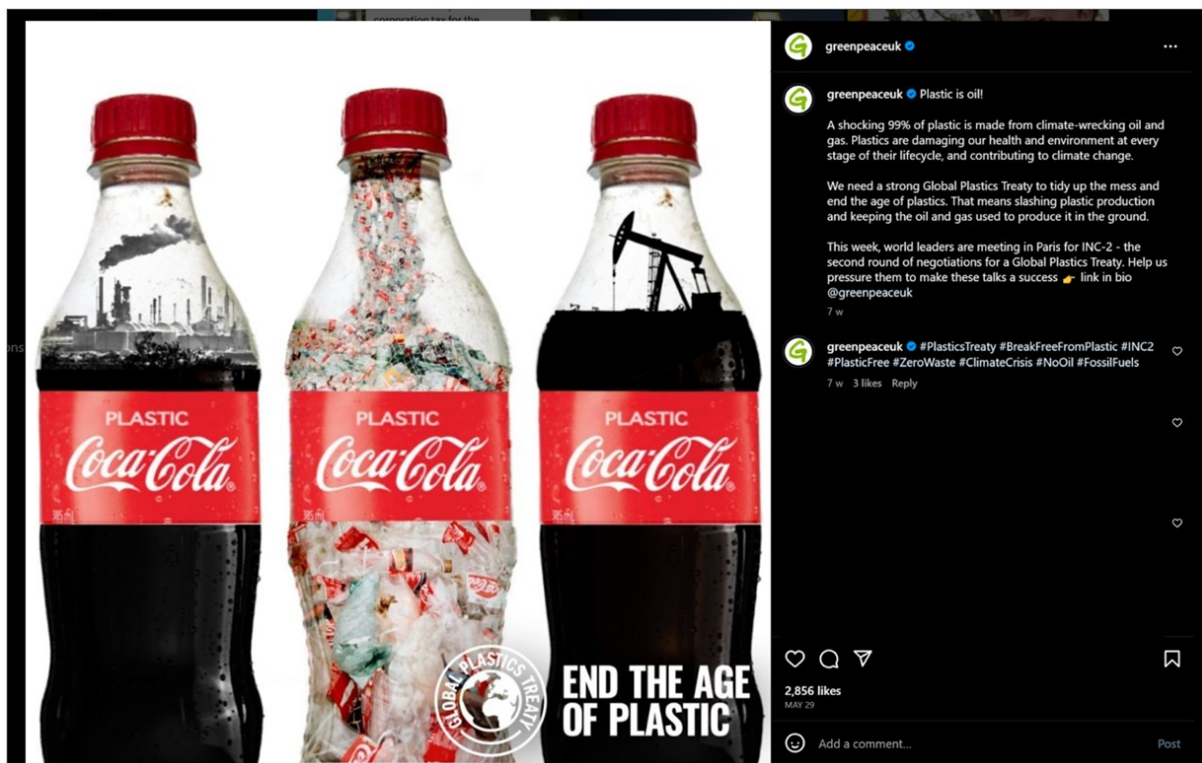


Figure 8. Greenpeace UK's Instagram post 'Link in bio: Coca-Cola'

The post from May 29th, 2023, has an image of three, clear, red-capped Coca-Cola bottles in a row. Each bottle displays a modified version of the traditional red Coca-Cola label on the front. In addition to the brand name, there is a text above the Coca-Cola label that reads: "PLASTIC" (Figure 8). The bottles have some brown smudge below the caps. The lower parts of the bottles have water drops on their sides. The water drops usually seem to portray freshness or coldness in Coca-Cola ads. Each bottle has a distinct scene captured inside the bottle. The neutral, white background makes the bottles the centre of attention. The bottles on the sides look like they have liquid in them but the one in the middle is transparent. In the bottom right corner, there is a logo ordered by Greenpeace (Flow n.d.) featuring the words "Global Plastics Treaty" (Figure 8) on the left, alongside an image of the globe, depicted from the African perspective. On the left, white text says: "END THE AGE OF PLASTIC" (Figure 8).

The bottle on the left reveals a factory emitting smoke from one of its chimneys. The scene is all black and grey. The bottle on the middle has colourful plastic trash almost filled to the top. Some of the trash are old, crushed Coca-Cola bottles. It appears as though a waterfall of trash is flowing from the cap into the existing pile, which is contained within a net resembling a fishing net. This seems like a statement to the plastic problem in the oceans as well. The bottle on the right portrays a black scene of a pumpjack in an oil well. These scenes may construct *logos* in the reader because they portray direct cause-and-effect of an environmental issue. They can also affect *pathos*. All the scenes are quite grim, giving the impression that the world is going to be buried in plastic which pollutes the environment. This can create an anxious feeling in the more sensitive readers, raising the need for action regarding the situation.

In the caption, the reminder is right in the beginning:

Plastic is oil!

A shocking 99% of plastic is made from climate-wrecking oil and gas. Plastics are damaging our health and environment at every stage of their lifecycle, and contributing to climate change.

We need a strong Global Plastics Treaty to tidy up the mess and end the age of plastics. That means slashing plastic production and keeping the oil and gas used to produce it on the ground.

This week, world leaders are meeting in Paris for INC-2 the second round of negotiations for a Global Plastics Treaty. Help us pressure them to make these talks a success 🙌 link in bio @greenpeaceuk

The hyperbolic and metaphoric phrase 'climate-wrecking' is repeated but used to refer to climate-wrecking oil and gas, instead of climate-wrecking equipment. In the third

sentence, Greenpeace aims to build *pathos* by creating concern for the negative impacts of plastics to human health, environment, and climate. Next, the phrasal verb 'tidy up' is used in "tidy up the mess" (Figure 8). This can be regarded as a *metaphor* because it involves ideological cleaning as well as the physical act of cleaning. As the middle bottle in the image also tries to convey, the environment is polluted and needs cleaning but the people's attitudes towards the use of plastic and environment in general need cleansing too. This idea is reflected in the figurative phrase "end the age of plastics" (Figure 8) as well.

Greenpeace creates *ethos* by constructing an image of itself as an organisation capable of influencing the world leaders. By mentioning the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee's meeting in Paris, which was yet to happen at the time of the post, May 29th 2023, they also display to the reader that they are up to date regarding current environmental affairs. By asking the readers to help pressure the world leaders, Greenpeace aims to create *pathos* in the reader. The organisation tries to convey that they trust the 'common people' and puts them on an equal level with Greenpeace and the world leaders - all of whom can make a difference.

The hashtags were added as a comment. In this thesis I have not looked at the comment sections but in this case I see it as appropriate because it seems that the hashtags were either forgotten from the post or they were deliberately added later.

The hashtags are:

#PlasticsTreaty #BreakFreeFromPlastic #INC2 #PlasticFree #ZeroWaste #ClimateCrisis  
#NoOil #FossilFuels

The hashtags "#BreakFreeFromPlastic", "#PlasticFree" and "#ZeroWaste" represent tangible goals readers can try to aim towards in their everyday lives (Figure 8) . Especially 'zero waste' has become one of the popular lifestyle trends of social media with over 11 million posts on May 4th, 2024. The hashtag "#ClimateCrisis" (Figure 8) reminds readers of the pressing need to address the overuse of plastics and fossil fuels. The hashtag can create *pathos* in the reader, stirring feelings of anxiety, guilt, or a sense of responsibility. The word crisis implies a severe situation that demands swift action, leading readers to contemplate on the urgency of addressing climate change. This sentiment aligns with Greenpeace's mission, which is to "make people rethink the way they live and (ab)use the Earth's environment" (Abbamonte & Cavaliere 2022: 120).

### 4.2.3 Sign a petition: Puffin

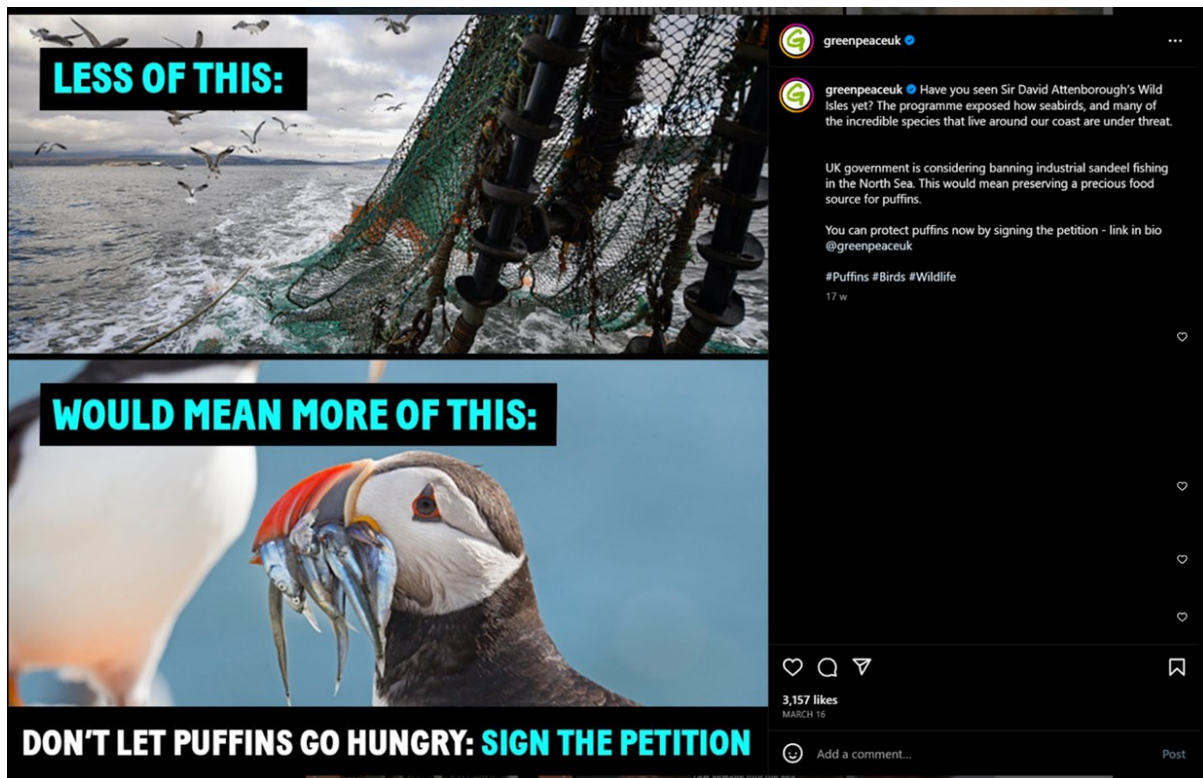


Figure 9. Greenpeace UK's Instagram post 'Sign a petition: Puffin'

The post from March 16th, 2023, is related to commercial fishing. The post includes distinctive *pathos* which is built via the image and the caption in multiple occasions. The image is divided into two smaller horizontal pictures. The top picture portrays a commercial fishing boat with a black and green fishing net hanging on the water on the backside of the boat. There is a flock of seagulls flying behind the net. According to Ledin and Machin (2018: 49), colours can be used to create moods, associations, and contrasts between things. The sky is cloudy and grey which gives a foreboding atmosphere to the image. The boat seems to be going at a fast pace as it leaves a wake behind it. The land can be seen far in the horizon.

The picture below features a close-up of a puffin with its distinctive colourful beak full of small fish. The sky is blue, and the sun is shining which makes the atmosphere lighter when compared to the upper photo. The photo is taken from the side angle featuring the puffin's left side of the head. Besides the head, only its neck is slightly showing. The bird is positioned slightly to the right of centre. At the left there is another puffin, but it is out of focus and only its middle portion is visible. This blurring effect makes the puffin with the fish in its beak more salient.

The upper photo has text at the top left corner which says "LESS OF THIS:" (Figure 9). The text is light neon blue on a black background which makes the text stand out.

The photo below has the text in the same position, and it adds “WOULD MEAN MORE OF THIS:” (Figure 9) to the previous phrase. By placing the texts in the same position in each photo, the viewer is invited to compare the content of the two images and through comparison is hoped to realise that fishing less would mean more food for puffins. Traditionally, colons are followed by text. In this instance, the colons refer to the images. At the bottom of the lower photo there is a concluding text on white and blue which displays clear *pathos*: “DON’T LET PUFFINS GO HUNGRY: SIGN THE PETITION” (Figure 9). Greenpeace asks the reader directly to take action to help protect the puffins, hinting that the reader might be partly at fault for the distress of the puffins if they do not sign the petition. Presumably, the goal is to improve puffins' lives, but also criticise the current scale of commercial fishing.

Another contrast is created between the flock of seagulls and the puffin. As previously mentioned, Ledin and Machin (2018: 54) say that e.g., looking at a photograph of a person may lead to a feeling of a closer connection compared to viewing a group of people. The seagulls in the picture above also need fish to eat but as we do not think about them as individuals due to the group effect, the connection to the seagulls stays weak. This directs the viewer’s attention to the puffin and increases our relation to the puffin. According to Ledin and Machin (2018: 60), the horizontal front angle can increase the viewer involvement when compared to seeing an object from the side angle. However, puffins are usually photographed from the side due to their distinguishable beak. When photographed from the front, the shape of their eyes would remain hidden which raises the question if the involvement is more dependent on the thing being photographed rather than the angle.

Other elements within the image also carry a sense of *pathos*. For example, humans may look at puffins thinking they look sad due to the shape of their clown-like eyes. Then, there is the juxtaposition of commercial fishing against hungry puffins. The image, along with the reference to ‘less of this would mean more of this’, may cause the reader to advocate for the perceived innocent party in this created conflict. Aristotle’s rhetoric is found in the caption as well:

Have you seen Sir David Attenborough’s Wild Isles yet? The programme exposed how seabirds, and many of the incredible species that live around our coast are under threat.

UK government is considering banning industrial sandeel fishing in the North Sea. This would mean preserving a precious food source for puffins.

You can protect puffins now by signing the petition – link in bio @greenpeaceuk

#Puffins #Birds #Wildlife



The first sentence includes a rhetorical question. Greenpeace does not expect the reader to respond; instead, the intention may be to evoke curiosity or create further discussion (Harris 2018: 172). The question establishes *ethos* by referring to Sir David Attenborough, who is a known broadcaster, a narrator of several nature documentaries, and a naturalist who has advocated on behalf of nature for decades. By mentioning Sir David Attenborough, Greenpeace uses his reputation to make their message more believable and to build trust in their organisation. Next, the paragraph states to the reader that seabirds and other ‘incredible species’ are ‘under threat’. Emotive language such as this is also used later, for example, in the phrase “precious food source for puffins” (Figure 9). These can create *pathos* as they aim to stir the reader's emotions by eliciting compassion and worry about the species.

Then, a logical reason for signing the petition is given since the British government is already considering banning sandeel fishing. With this example, it is shown to the reader that signing the petition can really make a difference because banning sandeel fishing would lead to increased food sources for puffins. This may increase *logos* in the post. The last sentence includes alliteration in the phrase “protect puffins” (Figure 9) which asserts attention to it, making it more memorable to the reader (Harris 2018: 157–158). By directly mentioning the reader (‘you’), Greenpeace aims to show that anyone can make a difference and again reflects their community mindset.

#### 4.2.4 Sign a petition: Drowning hand

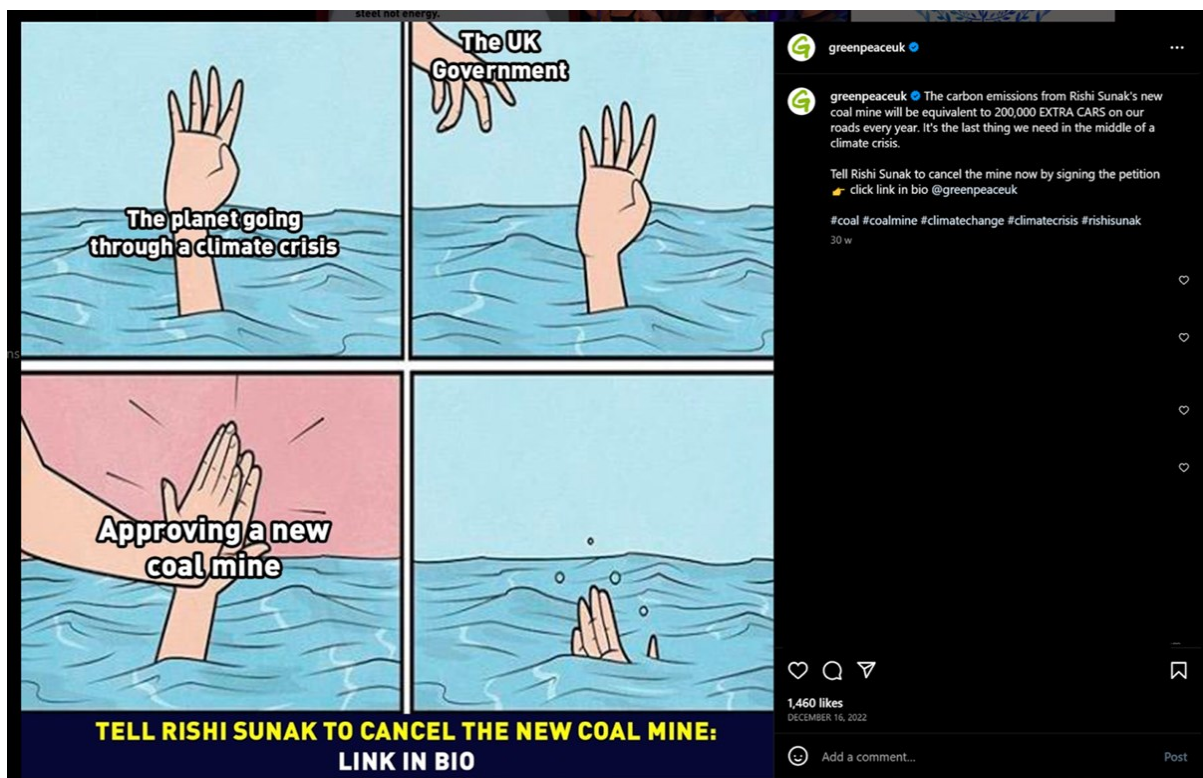


Figure 10. Greenpeace UK's Instagram post 'Sign a petition: Drowning hand'

The post from December 16th, 2022, belongs to the 'sign a petition' category. The post has an image made by a Russian artist Anton Gudim. The image resembles a cartoon strip with four panels. It was published in 2017 and after that became a viral meme circulating the social media platforms. Often, it can be seen with a humorous text accompanying the first three panels. Greenpeace picked up the viral trend and added their own text to the meme which is related to approving a new coal mine in the United Kingdom. Even though Instagram posts are not clear advertisements, they are similar in a way that they aim to strengthen the organisation's brand image. And when it comes to advertisements, using an image that has gone viral has the potential to bring more visibility to the advertisement (Barber 2021: 4-5). Additionally, due to the viral element related to the Instagram algorithm, the elements of Greenpeace's post going viral were there. However, the relatively low number of likes suggests a late entry onto the meme trend, possibly limiting its spread.

The scene in the image starts from the top left square where a white human hand emerges from the blue ocean amidst the waves. The sky is blue with no clouds in the sky. In front of the palm there is a white text saying "The planet going through a climate crisis" (Figure 10). The word 'crisis' emphasises the explicit distress in the scene. As discussed previously, the phrasing 'climate crisis' can potentially increase *pathos*. The second panel on the top right mirrors the setting of the first square. Here, another white hand emerges from the top left corner, labelled with a text that says, "The UK government" (Figure 10). It seems to reach out to the person in the water. The reader may begin to wonder whether the person is going to be saved after all. The third panel on the bottom left differs from the other scenes as in this one the sky is red. As previously mentioned, the red colour aids in catching the viewer's attention (Lester 2021: 39). The newly appeared hand gives a high five to the drowning hand. This impression is created with motion lines surrounding the hands indicating movement. A text in front of the hands says: "Approving a new coal mine" (Figure 10). In the final panel on the bottom right, the hand in the water begins to sink beneath the waves. There are air bubbles suggesting that the person drowned and thus, the reader loses the hope of a rescue mission.

By adding the text to the image, Greenpeace aims to show that approving a new coal mine is detrimental to the environment and comparable to not helping a person who is clearly drowning. The progression of the scene is used to create *pathos* in the viewer. The scene reinforces the logical argument that human actions have serious consequences for the environment. The same theme is present in the caption:

The carbon emissions from Rishi Sunak's new coal mine will be equivalent to 200,000 EXTRA CARS on our roads every year. It's the last thing we need in the middle of a climate crisis.

Tell Rishi Sunak to cancel the mine now by signing the petition

👉 click link in bio @greenpeaceuk

#coal #coalmine #climatechange #climatecrisis #rishisunak

The caption begins with an *analogy*, which is a rhetorical device used to point out similarity, or similarities, between two different things to help understand an issue. It is similar to *simile*, but analogy is used to create a literal understanding while simile is used more for artistic effect. (Harris 2018: 89). Comparing the new coal mine to the use of 200 000 extra cars is also an example of *logos*, which is used to point out the situation's absurdity in the middle of a climate crisis as they point out in the next sentence. This is also emphasised with the hashtags “#climatechange” and the latter “#climatecrisis” (Figure 10) which was present in the Coca-Cola post as well. As has been the case with previous Greenpeace posts, in this one too the source of the information is missing which hinders their credibility (*ethos*).

Greenpeace tries to mitigate this by attributing the matter to Rishi Sunak. It is not uncommon for Greenpeace to target politicians directly in their campaigns (Greenpeace UK 2023). The post blames the British government for approving the new coal mine. The blame focuses on Rishi Sunak as he is the current prime minister of the United Kingdom. He has been a long-term subject in Greenpeace UK's Instagram posts due to his contradictory behaviour regarding climate politics. For example, he has been criticised for failing to attend the COP27 summit (BBC 2022) as well as for his inconsistent views on climate policy (Harvey et al. 2023).

Similarly to the puffin post, at the end of the caption, the post asks directly to sign the petition. This approach is transparent, unlike the 'link in bio' category, where readers are left uncertain about the destination of the link. Finally, the hashtags serve as a reminder of what the post is about: #climatecrisis.



#### 4.2.5 Event: *The Unbearable Weight of Massive Talent*



Figure 11. Greenpeace UK's Instagram post 'Event: The unbearable weight of massive talent'

The post from March 23rd, 2023, falls under the 'event' category. The post has two pictures from the movie *The Unbearable Weight of Massive Talent* (2022). The picture on the left is a close-up photograph of Nicolas Cage. On the right, there is a similar photograph of the actor Pedro Pascal. The movie tells the story of a fictionalised version of Nicolas Cage as he navigates a chaotic adventure involving his past acting roles, an undercover CIA operation, and his attempts to revive his career. These two pictures combined became a meme after the movie came out. They are taken from a scene where Nick Cage (played by Nicolas Cage) and Javi Gutierrez (played by Pedro Pascal) are in a car, both under the influence of drugs and Javi is trying to drive them back to his house. There has also been a video version of this scene circulating the internet. In both the picture version and the video version, viewers can see the concerned or serious face of Nick and the smiling, happy face of Javi. Then, a text is added to create a contrast between two things: a serious and a care-free one. It is not essential to have seen the movie to understand the meme which makes it easily shareable.

In the post, the photograph of Nick represents a possible new Greenpeace volunteer, and the photograph of Javi represents the British government. Above Nick's photograph there is a text which says, "Me concerned about the climate crisis" (Figure

11). The use of 'me' in the phrase personalises the message because it creates a direct connection between the reader and climate change. By phrasing it this way, Greenpeace seems to emphasise the individual's role in addressing the climate crisis. On the right, above Javi's photograph there is a text saying, "The UK government doing very little about it" (Figure 11). These phrases serve as a reminder that everyone should be concerned about the climate crisis and take action in their own way and not rely on the government to fix the issue. With this post, Greenpeace aims to increase their credibility (*ethos*) by creating an image of themselves as an organisation which holds other parties accountable for their actions, or lack thereof, regarding climate change. Considering the context of the movie scene, it can be inferred that Greenpeace recognises they are not perfect either but consider themselves still more responsible than the British government.

With the image, the reader has been directed to think about what they could personally do to mitigate climate change. This theme continues in the caption:

Have you had enough of government inaction on climate?

Take matters into your own hands and join our next welcome call for new volunteers on 29th March - sign up here 📍 Link in Bio @greenpeaceuk

Similarly to the puffin post by Greenpeace and the water post by WWF, in this post too, the rhetorical question serves as an opening to the caption. According to McGuigan (2011: 34), when asking rhetorical questions, even if the answer is a simple 'yes' or 'no', the question should not leave the reader uncertain about the correct way to answer. This is made clear by Greenpeace in the next sentence where the reader is asked to take matters into their own hands by joining the next welcome call. 'Welcome calls' are events that the staff at Greenpeace UK and older volunteers hold for newcomers each month (Greenpeace UK Greenwire n.d). Inviting the readers to the welcome call creates a sense of community which can make the reader feel valued and welcomed into the organisation. Finally, Greenpeace makes one final attempt to make the reader attend the event by using the finger pointing emoji '👉' to point out to "Link in Bio" (Figure 11) via which the reader can sign up for the event.

#### 4.2.6 Summary of Greenpeace UK's Instagram posts

Greenpeace's posts appear to serve as a wake-up call for the general public. They openly blame humans, including companies and politicians, for the state of the climate, while also highlighting Greenpeace's role in advocating for improvement. Similar to WWF, Greenpeace's posts also include Aristotle's rhetoric along with various rhetorical devices. These are presented in the Table 4 below:

Table 4. Rhetorical elements in Greenpeace UK's Instagram posts.

<b>Greenpeace UK's posts</b>	<b>Rhetorical elements</b>
Link in bio: Shell	Ethos, Pathos, Alliteration, Hyperbole, Metaphor, Parallelism, Rhetorical question
Link in bio: Coca-Cola	Ethos, Pathos, Logos, Hyperbole, Metaphor
Sign the petition: Puffin	Ethos, Pathos, Logos, Alliteration, Rhetorical question
Sign the petition: Drowning hand	Ethos, Pathos, Logos, Analogy
Event: <i>The Unbearable Weight of Massive Talent</i>	Ethos, Rhetorical question

## 5 DISCUSSION

This study was set out to examine how Greenpeace UK and WWF UK use language and visual imagery in their Instagram posts to encourage potential customers to take action, and how their posts differ rhetorically. Despite having similar goals regarding environmental issues, WWF and Greenpeace have been perceived as drastically different for many decades. However, this thesis suggests that the rhetorical elements employed in their Instagram posts may not be as different as initially thought.

Nevertheless, considering the limited sample size of only 10 posts, which were selected for the analysis out of a pool of approximately 1000 posts, further research is needed to provide more definitive insights. Furthermore, purposefully choosing the data can increase the risk of introducing the researcher's bias. However, as Schreier (2013: 171) suggests, examining the data thoroughly can mitigate this bias. Also, by transparently explaining the codes through which the data was chosen, the risk diminishes further.

By doing individual post analysis, it was shown that still relevant insights can be gathered using a small sampling size. Despite sharing similar goals regarding environmental protection, WW and Greenpeace have differences in their thematic focuses and in the way they address environmental issues, as reflected in their Instagram posts. WWF seems to work within existing discussion frameworks, whereas Greenpeace takes a more aggressive approach to bringing change. For example, in 4 out of 5 of Greenpeace's posts (excluding the puffin post 4.2.3), Greenpeace is not afraid to criticise politicians or companies directly. This aspect aligns with prior research on Greenpeace (see e.g., Brennan & Merkl-Davies 2014, Davis et al. 2015 etc.). Meanwhile, WWF UK adopts a more neutral tone, hoping to reach a wider audience. For instance, in the posts related to koalas (4.1.1) and big cats (4.1.4), WWF acknowledges their extinction risk without examining the root causes.

This strategic ambiguity potentially draws wider agreement, possibly leading to increased donations.

Ultimately, both organisations aim to attract donors and advocate for similar causes. The data suggests that in their efforts to do so, both organisations seem to rely notably on Aristotle's *ethos* and *pathos* using a combination of visual and textual elements but in a different manner. For example, WWF enhances their *pathos* through compelling animal imagery and the use of emojis in the captions. Whereas Greenpeace aims to create visual contrast between things, for example by placing the sandeel fishing boat next to the puffins as shown in section 4.2.3. Greenpeace UK uses the phrase 'climate crisis' on several occasions, but WWF UK does not fall behind with phrases such as 'it's more important than ever' and 'bring our world back to life'. Both organisations build their *ethos* in unique ways: WWF refers to the living planet report and prominently features its @wwf\_uk account tag, while Greenpeace reminds the readers of their sense of community by using inclusive language such as 'we'. Also, several rhetorical devices were found, such as metaphor, metonymy, and alliteration, among others. As demonstrated in the analysis, these devices work as persuasive tools, enriching and enhancing the messages the organisations want to convey.

While *ethos*, *pathos*, and other rhetorical elements were found in this study, it is important to note that interpretations can vary among interpreters due to the subjectivity in analysing posts. Additionally, people's feelings toward environmental issues vary, meaning that some rhetorical approaches may resonate more with those deeply interested in environmental issues. Consequently, another researcher may arrive at different interpretations based on their perspectives and biases. However, as this thesis discusses the ways these organisations may engage their audiences on Instagram, it contributes to the ongoing discussions in the field of rhetoric and ecolinguistics by offering insights into persuasive elements employed on the Instagram accounts of two major environmental organisations.

## 5.1 Implications and applications

Studying the rhetoric employed in the Instagram posts of both organisations is crucial because there exists a correlation between individuals' perceptions of environmental issues and their subsequent actions towards them. It is important to study the rhetoric employed in the two organisations' Instagram posts because there exists a correlation between people's perceptions of environmental issues and their actions (Abbamonte & Cavaliere 2022: 129), and as global environmental organisations Greenpeace and WWF have a wide audience they can reach. Whorf argued that language "actively creates reality" (as cited in Fill 2017: 4) meaning it is not just a reflection of it. This idea

has been supported over the years by many scholars e.g., von Humboldt, Sapir, Steinthal, Boas, Voegelin, Hymes, Halliday, Hjelmslev, Firth and Mulholland among others (Koerner 1992: 173; Halliday 2001: 179; Mulholland 1992: xvii). Since language can create reality, the ways in which WWF and Greenpeace or other environmental organisations use language have an impact on environmental actions. In other words, as ecolinguists argue, how environmental issues are discussed affects their treatment: whether the problems are solved or ignored.

I claim that it is important that the language and visual elements are such which encourage people to act e.g., to donate money to the organisations, or to sign petitions because this way the organisations' work on behalf of the environment can continue. Especially, as Doyle (2007: 134) reminds that "identification of an environmental problem does not in itself guarantee that the issue will gain public or political attention". Thus, it is important that these problems are addressed. The better the language included in the posts is understood, the more effective strategies can be created for addressing environmental challenges.

Persuading people to donate can be considered ethically questionable but this is nothing new, as the action is comparable to a company selling a product, and one main point of advertisements is to get people to buy the product (Tom & Eves 2012: 39). There is the other side of the coin, too, as understanding the advertisers' persuasive tactics can increase the knowledge on media literacy. Examining the language and communication tactics of environmental organizations provides valuable insights into environmental advocacy in general. And as language can create reality - and vice versa - the way environmental issues are framed and communicated could impact public perception and policy making.

## 6 CONCLUSION

This study was set up to examine how Greenpeace UK and WWF UK persuade their potential customers in their Instagram posts using linguistic or visual rhetorical elements. The aim was also to investigate how their Instagram posts differ rhetorically. Several rhetorical elements were identified through the analysis. Aristotle's *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* were present in the majority of the posts. In addition, 11 rhetorical devices were found from the Instagram posts. The found devices were alliteration, analogy, hyperbole, epithet, exemplum, metaphor, metonymy, onomatopoeia, parallelism, rhetorical question, and wordplay.

The study was conducted using qualitative content analysis and image analysis. Qualitative content analysis proved particularly efficient in narrowing down the data set from a pool of 1000 to 10 posts. It provided a strong foundation for the analysis as well, mitigating the risk for researcher's bias. Potential ways to expand this topic in the future would be considering a more comprehensive take on image analysis or bringing quantitative elements into the research. The results indicate that both organisations employ various rhetorical devices in their posts, suggesting the possibility for further insights beyond those currently explored.

Future research could include expanding the data set to a greater number of posts or examining posts with multiple images. The latter includes the possibility of incorporating more rhetorical elements into the post, or using different kind of rhetoric (e.g., narrative-driven). It would be interesting to examine whether their rhetoric has changed or will change over time. For example, Greenpeace is currently in a legal battle with Shell, and it possibly affects the rhetoric they use. In a similar manner, current urgent issues, such as large forest fires, floods, or other natural disasters, could affect WWF's communication strategy as they might require immediate attention.

The significance of private donations may have an increasing role in the future if the government funding for environmental programmes varies or decreases, especially as scientists are predicting a rise in severe environmental issues (IPCC 2021: 15). In summary, this study not only contributes to the existing understanding of how environmental organisations communicate with their audience but also underlines the importance of ongoing research because as several linguists have agreed: language has the power to change reality.



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