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Abstract

South Africa is home to the world's largest population of rhinoceroses. Over the past decade there has been a dramatic increase in the number of rhinos poached for their horns. These horns are smuggled out of South Africa and sold on the black markets of Southeast Asia, either as a party drug or as traditional medicine. The aim of this article is to analyse news reports on rhino poaching by using appraisal theory in order to establish whether emotive language is present in reporting on rhino poaching. Two corpus management tools, Sketch Engine and NewsBank, were used to select news reports on rhino poaching for analysis. The results of the analysis indicate that emotive language is present in the news reports. The article speculates that emotive language is used to influence the way in which readers perceive rhino poaching, in order to change their behaviour and involve them in the conservation effort.

Keywords: appraisal theory; rhino; rhino poaching; South Africa; news reporting; news reports; emotive language

1. Introduction

Poaching is defined as the act of trespassing on land or water, particularly "in order to kill or catch game" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, n.d., s.v. "poach, *v.2*").[1]

Over the past decade South Africa has lost more than 7 200 rhinos (officially "rhinoceros"; the shorter term "rhino" will be used throughout this article)—both black rhinos, *Diceros bicornis,* and white rhinos, *Ceratoterium simum*—due to poaching. These animals are poached for their horns which are in high demand in Asia, especially in Vietnam. "Some erroneously believe it has medicinal value, capable of anything from curing cancer to working as an aphrodisiac. Others use it as a kind of club drug, to be mixed with water or alcohol" (Bale 2018; see also Rademeyer 2012, ix).

Rhino horn consists of keratin, the same material that hair and fingernails consist of, and there is no scientific evidence that it has any benefit, medicinal or otherwise (Bale 2018; De Beer 2016, 3; Rademeyer 2012, ix). De Beer (2016, 3) explains that rhino horn carvings are also becoming increasingly popular. These carvings are "being used as prestige gifts among the wealthy elite" (De Beer 2016, 3).

Rhino horn is a product that people are willing to kill and die for. In his book *Killing for Profit: Exposing the Illegal Rhino Horn Trade*, investigative journalist, Julian Rademeyer (2012, ix), states that "on the black markets of Southeast Asia, rhino horn is worth more per kilogram than gold, cocaine, platinum or heroin. And yet … its value is artificial, founded on myth and propagated by greed."

South Africa is home to about 80% of the world's rhino population (Rademeyer 2012, viii). This makes South Africa an easy target for rhino poachers.

In this article, selected news reports on rhino poaching will be analysed by using Martin and White's (2005) appraisal theory. The aim is to establish whether, and to what extent, emotive language is present in these reports. In this article, the notion of "emotion" is understood within the context of the appraisal attitudinal sub-category of affect, which is discussed in section 4.4. Emotions are affectional values or feelings that writers or speakers and readers or listeners have toward something. Macagno and Walton (2014, 5) argue that emotive language can be used as a tool to influence the way in which readers perceive the reality of the rhino poaching situation. I speculate that this could

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1 Brockington, Duffy and Igoe (2008, 77) explain that poaching can range from subsistence hunting (hunting for food) with traps and snares to hunting to obtain profitable wildlife products such as rhino horn. Brockington, Duffy and Igoe (2008, 77) go on to explain that in sub-Saharan Africa, the arrival of colonial rule was accompanied by new stipulations on hunting. Mackenzie (1988) points out that subsistence hunting was criminalised by law whilst newly created parks and reserves were opened up for recreational hunting by Europeans.
It should be kept in mind that this article is primarily a linguistic discourse study in which appraisal theory is the major theory being employed. It is not a political study.

lead to a change in reader behaviour and (re)actions, and ultimately to a change in the poaching situation.

2. Rhino Poaching in South Africa: The State of Affairs

In January 2018, the then Minister of Environmental Affairs, Edna Molewa, released the poaching figures from 2017 (see Figure 1 below). During 2017, 26 fewer rhinos where poached than in 2016. However, at 1 028 rhinos poached across South Africa in 2017, this year marked the fifth year in a row that more than 1 000 rhinos were poached in South Africa, as is illustrated in Figure 1 (Department of Environmental Affairs 2019). It is no wonder that Brebner (2013, 31) states that rhinos are the most threatened large mammal species in the world.
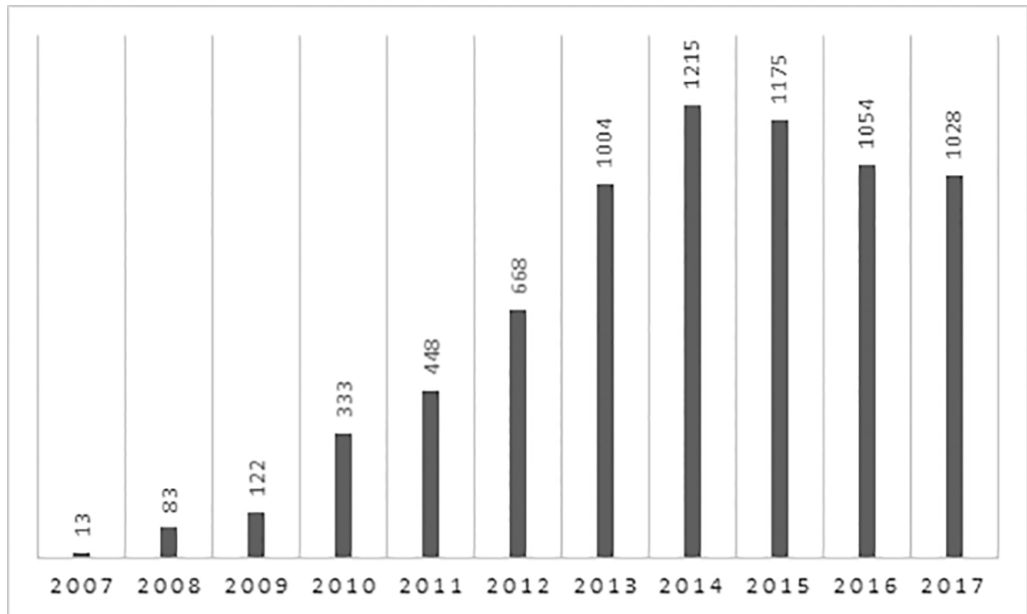

Figure 1: Number of rhinos poached in South Africa over the past decade (Department of Environmental Affairs 2019)

South Africa's rhino poaching crisis is compounded by corruption and lack of coordination among law enforcement groups. The arrest of 21 government officials during 2017, and the continued arrests of law enforcement and conservation officials, for their involvement in rhino poaching, is proof of this (Walker and Walker 2017, xxvii, 35–37; Rademeyer 2012, ix).

3. Hypothesis

Because of the staggering number of rhinos being poached and the violence used in these attacks, as well as the recent death of the last male northern white rhino (Ol Pejeta Conservancy 2018), the hypothesis of this study is that the language used in news reports on rhino poaching is highly emotive.

The aim of this article is to analyse a number of news reports on rhino poaching by using appraisal theory (Martin and White 2005) to pay close attention to the domains of *attitude*, which refers to feelings such as emotional reactions and "judgements of behaviour" (Martin and White 2005, 35), and *graduation*, which refers to the amplification of feelings. The results of this analysis will indicate to what extent emotive language is present in the articles and what possible functions the use of emotive words could have.

4. News Reporting

4.1 News Reports on Animals: Animals Sell Papers

When writing about the value of animal stories in news media, Rollin (2008, xvi) states that "animals sell papers." Molloy (2011, 2) agrees that animal stories account for "a substantial portion" of soft news. Such stories would typically include "human interest stories about baby animals, albino animals, the bond between humans and animals or some entertaining animal behaviours." These stories, according to Molloy (2011, 2), act as an "antidote" to hard news which typically focuses on "crime, politics, science, economics and war."

McNair (2009, 2) states that news is a commodity and journalism is an industry that generates billions "through sales, advertising, subscription and syndication." For this reason, advertising, as well as audience demand, therefore shapes today's media. According to Molloy (2011, 8), "journalism may attempt to regulate the polysemic nature of the news text" but, audiences are not homogenous. Instead,

> audiences are composed of active consumers who are able to negotiate the meanings of news and other media texts, and although far from being cultural dupes who passively absorb media messages that reproduce a dominant ideology, it is nonetheless apparent that popular media do, in multiple and diverse ways, shape public attitudes and belief about animals. (Molloy 2011, 8)

Molloy (2011, 8) further states that representations of animals are never neutral, whether in soft news, hard news or fictional texts. According to Molloy (2011, 8), these representations construct cultural discourses that connect directly with the realities of animal lives. Molloy (2011, 8) refers to Steve Baker who writes:

> To emphasize questions of representation is not therefore to deny any particular animal's "reality," in the sense of that animal's actual experience or circumstances. Instead, the point is to emphasise that representations have a bearing on shaping that "reality," and that the "reality" can be addressed only through the representations.

In other words, the representation of rhinos, and the reality of rhino poaching, is shaped by the way these rhinos are represented in popular mass media. It could be argued that the use of emotive language in the representation of rhinos, and situations of rhino poaching, could lead to more support from the public for conservation efforts, which would improve the reality of rhinos in South Africa.

Büscher (2016, 980) argues that this is precisely what happened after the Department of Environmental Affairs confirmed in January 2014 that 1 004 rhinos had been killed in South Africa in 2013, an increase of 50% from the 668 rhinos killed in 2012. According to Büscher (2016, 980) "a certain threshold seemed to have been surpassed" after the official number of rhinos poached during 2013 was released in 2014. Büscher (2016, 980) further states:

> The outcry on social media and the amount of voices … saying that rhino poaching was "out of control", reached epic proportions. Consequently, rhino poaching has become the preeminent conservation issue in South Africa and one of the main conservation issues worldwide.

Contrary to most news reports on animals, news reports on rhino poaching cannot be classified as soft news. News reports on rhino poaching fall into the category of hard news. The next section will shed some light on the differences between hard and soft news, with a particular focus on the features of hard news and whether hard news usually contains emotive words.

4.2 Hard vs. Soft News

Mass-media news reports can be divided into two categories: hard and soft news (Franklin et al. 2005, 98). Hard news reports are "typically associated with eruptive violence, reversals of fortune and socially significant breaches of the moral order" (White 2000, 101). Andrew Boyd (2001, 70) defines hard news simply as "information of importance to the listener," something that will have "a material impact" on people's lives (Franklin et al. 2005, 98). In other words, hard news is news that is of serious importance.

Hard news, as Boyd (2001, 70) as well as Itule and Anderson (2003, 123) point out, is written according to a specific formula. In hard news reporting, the story is constructed by asking who, what, when, where, why and how questions. The answers to these questions provide the most important information. In the rest of the news report, these details are backed up "with detail, background and interpretation, constructed to get the story across in a logical way" (Boyd 2001, 70).

Soft news, on the other hand, deals with matters of general interest. Soft news stories are those stories "that makes you go 'Aah!' or 'Wow'" (Franklin et al. 2005, 248). According to Franklin et al. (2005, 248), it is about "the first, the last, the fastest, the slowest, the biggest, the most expensive." Itule and Anderson (2003, 11; my emphasis) explain that soft news stories "are not usually considered *immediately important* or timely to a wide audience." These stories do, however, contain newsworthy elements; the media therefore often report them. Human-interest stories are good examples of soft news. Boyd (2001, 139) explains that for a story to be of human interest, it should "upset, anger, amuse, intrigue or appal" the reader.

Categorising news into hard and soft news stories is, however, not that easy. Franklin et al. (2005, 248) admit that the edges are blurred.

News reports on rhino poaching, which is a violent crime for which poachers are prosecuted (Callaway 2018), would for the most part be classified as hard news. Hard news reports require journalists to report objectively on current or topical events. But these news reports could also be classified as soft news as reports on rhino poaching (animal cruelty) would possibly "upset" and "anger" the reader—two emotions, as pointed out by Boyd (2001, 139) above, that could be attributed to soft news.

4.3 Objectivity in News Reports

Objectivity in news reporting is often defined as the reporting of information that is factual and true. Walter Cronkite (in Knowlton 2005, 227) defines objectivity as the "reporting of reality, of facts, as nearly as they can be obtained without the injection of prejudice and personal opinion." Michael Schudson (in Maras 2013, 8) is of the opinion that objectivity "guides journalists to separate facts from values and report only the facts."

However, definitions of objectivity such as the ones just quoted are criticised by some scholars. Boyd (2001, 200), for instance, argues that complete impartiality is like perfection: "an ideal for which many will strive but none will wholly attain." He goes further, explaining that even the most respected journalist "can only be the sum of his or her beliefs, experience and attitudes, the product of society, culture and upbringing" (Boyd 2001, 200). According to Boyd (2001, 200), no one can therefore be free from bias.

While scholars such as Boyd (2001) do make valid arguments, what the definitions of objectivity above come down to, is the reporting of facts in an emotionally detached but balanced way.

The definitions above might lead one to expect no emotive language in news reports on rhino poaching. In what follows, appraisal theory is used to determine if this is indeed the case.

4.4 Appraisal Theory

According to Martin and White (2005, 34–38), appraisal is one of three major discourse semantic resources concerned with interpreting interpersonal meaning, the other two being "negotiation" and "involvement" (Martin and White 2005, 34–35). Appraisal theory, which in this case refers to linguistic appraisal and not psychological appraisal, refers to "systems within systemic functional linguistics (SFL) that map evaluative language" (Macken-Horarik and Isaac 2014, 67).

Appraisal theory developed within the general theoretical framework of SFL and was especially informed by the "Sydney register of SFL" led by Jim Martin in the 1980s (Martin and White 2005, 7; see Eggins 2004, Martin 2014; Oteíza 2017). SFL has been developed on the foundation of work by the social semiotic linguist, Michael Halliday. One of Halliday's major contributions to linguistic analysis is his development of a detailed functional grammar of modern English (Halliday 1985). In this grammar, Halliday shows how simultaneous strands of meaning—ideational, interpersonal and textual—are expressed in clause structures. Ideational meaning construes experience of our outer and inner worlds while interpersonal meaning enacts social relations. Textual meaning weaves the former two functions together to create meaningful texts within their context (Halliday 1985; Eggins 2004).

Appraisal is concerned with construing interpersonal meaning. It is concerned with the "subjective presence of writer/speakers in texts as they adopt stances towards both the material they present and those with whom they communicate" (Martin and White 2005, 1). Martin and Rose (2003, 22) state that this theory can be used to evaluate the attitudes expressed in a text, as well as the strength of the feelings involved. Martin and Rose (2003) and Martin and White (2005) divide appraisal into three main semantic systems or domains: *attitude*, *engagement* and *graduation*. This framework presents a "systematic organisation of the semantic resources used to negotiate emotions, judgements and valuation, alongside resources for amplifying and engaging with these evaluations" (Martin 2000, 145; also see Oteíza 2017, 460). Figure 2 provides a visual overview of the resources of appraisal.

The appraisal resource of attitude is concerned with how we feel about and evaluate things. This includes emotional reactions and judgements of behaviour (Martin and White 2005, 35). Attitude, as illustrated in Figure 2, is subdivided into three regions (or

sub-categories) of feeling: *affect*, *judgement* and *appreciation*. Affect refers to the expression of feelings, whether directly or indirectly. These feelings could be either positive or negative. Judgement is concerned with the assessing (judging) of human behaviour according to various normative principles and expectations, and appreciation is concerned with the value of things, specifically focusing on non-humans, in other words, the evaluation of objects (Martin and White 2005, 35–36; Sabao 2016, 46). For the purposes of this study, attitude refers to emotions, judgement to ethics, and appreciation to aesthetics (Martin and White 2005, 42; Oteíza 2017, 460). These three systems encode feeling, "but affect can be seen as the basic system. Affectual values have been argued to be subsuming the other attitudinal resources, as no judgement or appreciation without affect occurs" (Jakaza and Visser 2016, 8).
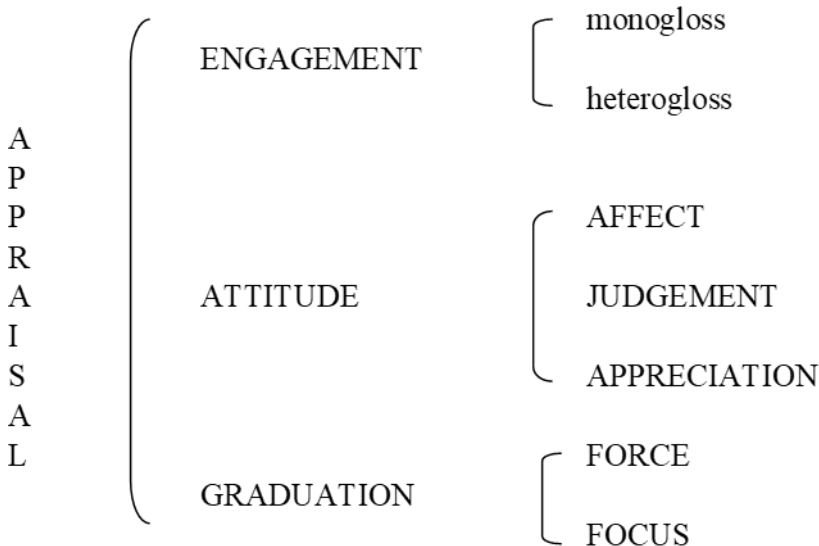
```
                          ┌─ monogloss
         ENGAGEMENT    ┌─┤
A   ┌─                 └─ heterogloss
P  │
P  │                       ┌─ AFFECT
R  │                    ┌─┤
A  ┤    ATTITUDE      ─┤    JUDGEMENT
I  │                    └─ APPRECIATION
S  │
A  │                       ┌─ FORCE
L  └─   GRADUATION     ─┤
                          └─ FOCUS
```

Figure 2: An overview of appraisal resources (Martin and White 2005, 38)

Engagement is concerned with the assessment of resources "for positioning the speaker's/author's voice with respect to the various propositions and proposals conveyed by a text" (Sabao 2016, 46). In other words, engagement refers to the "play of voices" or engagement with other voices around opinions in discourse and the negation of an interpersonal space for the speaker's/author's position within the discourse (Martin and White 2005, 36).

Graduation is concerned with the way in which writers present themselves as more or less strongly aligned with the value position being advanced by the text (Martin and White 2005, 94). Graduation is divided into force and focus, as illustrated in Figure 2. Force is the use of intensifiers such as "very" or "really" and attitudinal lexis such as "love" or "fantastic," as well as metaphors or swearing. Focus "sharpens" or "softens" an attitude by the use of words such as "about" (softens) or "exactly" (sharpens).

For the purpose of this article, only the appraisal categories of attitude and graduation will be considered as indicators of emotion. The use of two categories only is similar to Grundlingh's (2017) approach of only considering the category of attitude in her study on the identification of markers of sensationalism in online news reports on crime. Similarly, Jakaza and Visser (2016) only consider the subcategory of affect in their study on controversial and emotional parliamentary debates.

5. Method

For the purposes of this article, two different corpus management tools, Sketch Engine and NewsBank, were used to gather and select news reports on rhino poaching for analysis.

5.1 Sketch Engine

The first corpus was compiled using Sketch Engine, which is corpus management and text analysis software developed by Lexical Computing Limited in 2003 (Lexical Computing, n.d.). The purpose of this software is to enable those interested in language behaviour to search large text collections according to complex and linguistically motivated queries (Sketch Engine, n.d.).

5.1.1 Corpus Builder

Sketch Engine has a built-in function which allows users to build corpora from texts found on the internet. This function was used to build a corpus of news reports on rhino poaching. The corpus-building process works as follows: the user provides the program with seed words, which the program then uses in various combinations to search for items on the internet. In this case, the program was instructed to search for news reports on rhino poaching by using the seed words "rhino poaching," "poacher," "rhino horn," "dehorning" and "rhino crisis"; see Table 1.

These seed words resulted in the compilation of a corpus containing 250 523 tokens (words) in 170 documents; see Table 2.

After the corpus was built, the wordlist tool was used to list all the words in the corpus. The frequencies of all the words in the corpus are displayed in the wordlist. This makes it easy to see how many times each word occurs in the corpus, as well as which words occur the most frequently; see Table 1. The wordlist tool (which provides a list of all the words in the corpus) and the concordance function (a list of words with context provided) were used to determine relevant keywords and collocations (pairs or groups of words that are habitually juxtaposed). This included the following keywords: "rhino," "poacher" and "poaching." The collocations included "rhino poaching," "rhino poacher" and "poaching crisis."

The searches mentioned above led to the following results:

Table 1: Search results from the Sketch Engine corpus

Keyword(s)	Frequency number
rhino	5 343
poacher	737
poaching	1 376
"rhino poaching"	453
"rhino poacher"	72
"poaching crisis"	116

The keywords and collocations in the table above were selected to open a concordance list for each of the words. This function was used to locate relevant news reports. Because the frequencies of some of the words are reasonably high ("rhino" occurs 5 343 times and "poaching" 1 376 times), the "random sample" feature in the concordance tool was used. The "random sample" feature does exactly what its name says: It provides the user with a random, in-context sample of the occurrences of the word selected. From there, it was possible to access the news reports via the websites where they were hosted by simply selecting the relevant link in each concordance line.

With the help of the wordlist tool and concordance function, 25 news reports were selected for analysis.

5.2 NewsBank

The second corpus was compiled using NewsBank. NewsBank is a research platform consolidating current and archived information from thousands of newspaper titles and newswires (NewsBank, n.d.). NewsBank differs from Sketch Engine in that it is not possible to look at concordance lines or collocations—it is not possible to do any searches within the texts generated by NewsBank. This platform simply provides a list of articles, based on the search terms provided. It also provides access to each of the listed articles. Each article can be viewed on a new page on the NewsBank website, not in its original form or on the original platform.

NewsBank was used to search for news reports on rhino poaching in South African publications. The search terms "rhino poaching," "rhino poacher" and "poaching crisis" were used. These search terms differ from the ones used to compile the Sketch Engine corpus because they produced the best results. When the same search terms were used as in the Sketch Engine corpus, this led to a dismal return. The search terms were adapted in order to return a reasonable amount of news reports. These search terms led to 64 news reports on the topic of rhino poaching. After the duplicate news reports were identified, the remaining 56 news reports were read. Of these reports, 25 were selected for analysis.

Table 2: A comparison of the Sketch Engine and NewsBank corpora

	Sketch Engine	**NewsBank**
Seed words used to compile corpora	rhino poaching poacher rhino horn dehorning rhino crisis	rhino poaching rhino poacher poaching crisis
Search results	250 523 tokens 170 news reports	64 news reports
Number of reports selected for analysis	25	25

The method for analysing the selected news reports from Sketch Engine and NewsBank is quite simple. The selected news reports gathered through Sketch Engine were read online, in their original form. The selected news reports gathered through NewsBank were read online, via the archives on the NewsBank website. Any language fitting into the appraisal categories of "attitude" and "graduation" (Martin and White 2005, 34–36) was then identified. This is an extremely subjective process.

Because of the length limitations of this study, multimodal aspects included in the news reports, such as headlines and photographs, were not included in the analysis. These aspects could make for an interesting study in the future.

6. Analysis

In the discussion of the analysis below, each of the two corpora is considered individually. The focus of the analysis is on providing examples of journalists' attitudes, as well as examples of graduation that these journalists employed. This study considers appraisal on a lexical level by looking at single words and short phrases. The examples are followed by a discussion on the possible reasons for the inclusion of the examples of attitude and graduation and the effect(s) it might have on readers of the news reports.

The different categories of attitude (see Figure 2) are indicated as **aff** (affect), **jud** (judgement) and **app** (appreciation), with + or − indicating "positive" or "negative" attitudes. The categories of graduation (see Figure 2) will be indicated as **force** or **focus**, with + indicating an amplification of feelings and − a weakening of feelings.

Due to a limited amount of space, only a couple of examples emphasising the appraisal theory domains of attitude and graduation are included in the analysis. It should be taken into account that the news reports collected for analysis all stem from different publications, both online and print, each with their own style of reporting (house style).

6.1 Sketch Engine Corpus

It can be argued that the media shapes the way we view the world we live in (Burton 2010, 15–17). The norms of human–animal relations are no exception. According to Molloy (2011, 1) these norms are established and sustained through media reports on animals. Reports on rhino poaching therefore shape the way we view the poaching situation and its severity, especially when emotive language is visible in the reporting of these crimes.

As quoted above, Büscher (2016, 980) states that rhino poaching "has become the preeminent conservation issue in South Africa and one of the main conservation issues world wide." The fact that the Sketch Engine search produced hits from 170 (mostly international) news reports lends credibility to Büscher's statement.

The fact that rhinos are being killed on a regular basis (Department of Environmental Affairs 2019; see the rhino poaching figures in Figure 1), and that poaching has reached "crisis levels" (Walker and Walker 2017, 104; Griffiths 2015, 37; Rademeyer 2012, viii) is reflected in the language of the news reports.

(6.1.1) Rhinos around the world continue to be slaughtered en masse **[+force]**. (eNCA 2014)

(6.1.2) This is the highest level since the current crisis **[−app]** began to emerge in 2008.
Since then poachers have killed at least **[+focus]** 5 940 African rhinos. (IUCN 2016)

(6.1.3) The killing of rhinos **[−aff]** for their horns has reached crisis levels **[−app]** in South Africa. (Wildlife Pictures Online 2016)

(6.1.4) In 2008, 83 rhinos were killed for their horns **[−aff]**. This number is rising at an alarming rate **[−app; -jud +force].** (Wildlife Pictures Online 2016)

(6.1.5) She believes people are horrified **[+force]** that the slaughter of SA's rhinos **[−aff and +force]** can't be curbed—and is only escalating. (Bega 2012)

(6.1.6) But while work is being done to stop the slaughter, **[+force]** more and more, the response to the crisis **[−app]** is mired **[+force]** in debates over the legalisation of the rhino horn trade and dehorning rhino to protect them. (Bega 2012)

In the examples above, the seriousness of the rhino poaching situation is expressed by phrases such as "current crisis" (6.1.2), "crisis levels" (6.1.3) and "rising at an alarming rate" (6.1.4). By using the word "slaughter" in 6.1.1, 6.1.5 and 6.1.6, instead of the more neutral "killing," the journalist also brings the severity of the poaching situation in South Africa to the reader's attention.

The articles focus on the reasons for the poaching crisis: "the increasing demand and very high prices paid for rhino horn" (Duffy, Emslie, and Knight 2013, 5), and the belief in parts of Asia that rhino horn has medicinal properties which can enhance one's health, wealth and status (Rademeyer 2012, ix).

(6.1.7)   Opponents worry **[−aff]** that it would stimulate the black market trade that exists in parts of Asia, where rhino horn sells for 65 000 dollars a kilogram **[−app]**—more than gold or cocaine **[−jud; +force]**—and is touted as a cure for hangovers **[−jud]** and an aphrodisiac in countries like Vietnam. (Bosworth 2013)

(6.1.8)   The past few years have seen a dramatic rise **[+force]** in rhino poaching, fuelled by growing demand **[+force]** for rhinoceros horns in Vietnam and China where they are used to cure cancer, headaches and fever, although experts say **[+aff]** the horns have absolutely no **[+force]** medicinal value. (Conway-Smith 2012)

(6.1.9)   A study by U.S. firm Dalberg estimated the value of rhino horn at $60,000/kilo **[−app]**, making it more valuable **[+force]** on the black market than either diamonds or cocaine **[−app]**. This staggering figure **[+force]** has increased exponentially **[+force]** in the last ten years, with the value for the same amount of rhino horn estimated at $760 back in 2006. As poaching diminishes **[−app]** the remaining rhino population, the scarcity of the product makes it more valuable **[+force]**, in turn increasing the incentive to poach in the first place. (Macdonald 2017)

In examples 6.1.7 and 6.1.9 above, the street value of rhino horn is mentioned explicitly: "rhino horn sells for 65 000 dollars a kilogram—more than gold or cocaine" and "estimated the value of rhino horn at $60,000/kilo, making it more valuable on the black market than either diamonds or cocaine." This is a lot of money in any language, and, as stated by Rademeyer in his book *Killing for Profit: Exposing the Illegal Rhino Horn Trade* (2012), it is the driving force behind rhino poaching. Graduation is used by the journalists to emphasise the fact that rhino poaching has drastically increased: "… a dramatic rise in rhino poaching" (6.1.8), and "[t]he staggering figure has increased exponentially" (6.1.9). The reader is also clearly told where the demand for the poached rhino horn comes from and what it is used for: "… is touted as a cure for hangovers and an aphrodisiac in countries like Vietnam" (6.1.7) and "fuelled by growing demand for rhinoceros horns in Vietnam and China where they are used to cure cancer, headaches and fever" (6.1.9). In 6.1.9, the journalist's disapproval of the use of rhino horn is visible from the inclusion of the word "absolutely" in "although experts say the horns have absolutely no medicinal value." The journalist does, however, try to hide his dismay by including the phrase "experts say …" which takes the focus away from his feelings about the situation.

Molloy (2011, 7) points out that animals are "apolitical and malleable." They can easily be made to conform in support of any political agenda. Rhino poaching involves politics as it is a crime that transcends borders. We know that the poaching of rhinos usually occurs within the borders of South Africa because South Africa is home to the largest rhino population in the world. We also know that the horns are mostly smuggled to Asian countries such as Vietnam and China. Interestingly enough, the fact that many rhino poachers are Mozambican citizens is mentioned a few times in the Sketch Engine corpus consisting of news reports from international publications.

(6.1.10)   In January, Kruger park rangers found <u>eight dehorned rhino carcasses</u> **[+focus]** in the park in <u>just one day</u> **[+focus]**. Two suspected poachers, said to be <u>from Mozambique</u> **[−jud]**, were <u>killed in a shoot</u> out **[−aff]**. (Conway-Smith 2012)

(6.1.11)   South Africa's national parks authority has announced it is hiring an <u>extra 150 rangers</u> **[+force]** to protect the rhinos at Kruger park, while the country's environmental affairs ministry is considering <u>re-erecting an electric fence along the park's border with Mozambique</u> **[−app; −jud]**, were <u>some</u> **[−focus]** of the poachers are thought to come from. (Conway-Smith 2012)

Mozambique borders the Kruger National Park, where most of the poaching has taken place. In 2002, the border between the Kruger National Park and Mozambique was opened as part of the first phase in creating the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, which will link the Limpopo National Park in Mozambique, the Kruger National Park in South Africa, and the Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe, creating an enormous conservation area of 35 000 km², allowing animals to freely roam between the three countries. Some conservationists believe that taking down the fences would lead to an increase in poaching (Griffiths 2015, 34 and Hofstatter 2005).

In 6.1.10 above, the journalist makes use of graduation to stress the extent of poaching in the Kruger National Park "Kruger park rangers found eight dehorned rhino carcasses in the park in just one day" (6.1.10). The mention of the poachers' said nationality comes across as judgemental, especially in combination with the first sentence, in which the extent of their poaching spree is explained. The question of the opened border between South Africa and Mozambique comes to the fore in 6.1.11: "… [W]hile the country's environmental affairs ministry is considering re-erecting an electric fence along the park's border with Mozambique, were some of the poachers are thought to come from," which makes it seem like the journalist did not agree with the border being opened in the first place. The journalist's position on the nationality of the poacher is softened only by the use of the word "some" (6.1.11).

At times the language in the news reports mirrors the violence of the poaching attacks. This includes "fighting" (6.1.12); "increasingly brutal battle" (6.1.12) and "fight for the

future of the rhino" (6.1.13). In 6.1.13, the journalist feels strongly that it is our "moral obligation" to "fight" for the future of the rhinos.

(6.1.12)   Johannesburg, South Africa—Rangers at South Africa's Kruger National Park, a <u>major safari destination</u> **[+force]** that <u>is fighting</u> **[−aff]** an <u>increasingly brutal battle</u> **[+force; −aff]** with rhino poachers, have gone on an indefinite strike. (Conway-Smith 2012)

(6.1.13)   There are many reasons to <u>fight for the future of the rhinos</u> **[+aff]** that are left to us, not least of which is that it is our <u>moral obligation</u> **[+jud]** to do so. (Macdonald 2017)

Lastly, the corrupt nature of law enforcement and conservation authorities is addressed in the news reports.

(6.1.14)   The <u>dramatic price increase</u> **[+force]** has attracted <u>well-funded and highly-organised crime syndicates</u> **[−aff]** that now drive the rhino poaching in South Africa. These syndicates can afford the latest technology and <u>buy the services of skilled people and influential officials</u> **[−aff; −jud]**. Law enforcement in South Africa has meanwhile <u>lagged behind</u> **[−jud]** in countering this <u>new level of sophistication</u> **[+force]** in poaching. (Wildlife Pictures Online 2016)

(6.1.15)   This new style of poaching makes it increasingly difficult (and dangerous) **[+force]** for anti-poaching patrols to effectively protect **[+focus]** the remaining rhinos. To do so, patrols must anticipate where the poachers will strike next - an almost impossible task **[−focus]** considering the vast size **[+force]** of the parks and reserves in which the rhinos live. This is made even harder by large-scale corruption **[−aff]**, with syndicates using their wealth **[−jud]** to pay officials both within the parks and at the highest levels of government for information **[−jud]**. (Macdonald 2017)

In 6.1.14 above, the journalist's negative feelings toward law enforcement officials and their efforts (or lack thereof) to curb rhino poaching are visible through the use of the phrases "has meanwhile lagged behind" and "new level of sophistication" in "[l]aw enforcement in South Africa has meanwhile lagged behind in countering this new level of sophistication in poaching" (6.1.14). In 6.1.15, the journalist's frustration with the ease with which wealthy syndicates can bribe law enforcement officials becomes clear through the use of the phrases "large-scale corruption" and "using their wealth to pay officials … for information" in "[t]his is made even harder by large-scale corruption, with syndicates using their wealth to pay officials both within the parks and at the highest levels of government for information." By the use of the phrases "increasingly

difficult (and dangerous)," "effectively protect," "almost impossible task" and "vast size of the parks," the journalist in 6.1.15 acknowledges what a difficult task it is to protect rhinos from poachers

It is clear that the use of emotive language is present in news reports in the Sketch Engine corpus. The reasons for this type of language seem to vary from making the reader aware of the severity and scale of rhino poaching to exposing the violence and corruption that goes hand-in-hand with these attacks. The money and politics involved are also exposed and explored.

In the next section, news reports in the NewsBank Corpus are analysed.

6.2 NewsBank Corpus

The NewsBank Corpus consists of South African news reports only. In many regards, the focus of the news reports in this corpus is the same as that of the news reports in the Sketch Engine Corpus discussed in section 6.1. The biggest difference between the corpora seems to be the fact that there is a greater awareness of the brutal way in which rhinos are killed as well as of the scope of the situation and, lastly, of the ongoing war-like effort to prevent rhino poaching.

In the NewsBank corpus, the gravity of the rhino poaching situation comes to the fore in no uncertain terms:

(6.2.1)   Acting Hawks head Major-General Mthandazo Ntlemeza was <u>outraged at the brutal attack</u> **[−aff; +force]**, saying: "The manhunt is on and we will not rest until he is behind bars." (Wilson 2015).

(6.2.2)   The <u>rhino war</u> **[−aff]** has recently <u>turned nasty</u> **[−jud]**. (Smillie 2012)

(6.2.3)   There is a sense that <u>the war is ratcheting up</u> **[−aff]**. The big money in rhino horn means that poachers can buy expensive equipment and go toe to toe with the state. Rangers don't want their faces shown in press photographs, out of <u>fear of intimidation</u> **[−aff]**. (Smillie 2012)

(6.2.4)   The <u>fight to protect</u> **[+aff]** Mzansi's <u>threatened rhino population</u> **[−app]** from <u>criminal syndicates</u> **[−jud]** has claimed another poacher's life. (Sekwela 2017)

(6.2.5)   This is after Kruger National Park rangers <u>bust a group of poachers</u> **[+aff]** near Punda Maria, and the <u>thugs</u> **[−jud]** <u>opened fire</u> **[−aff]**. (Sekwela 2017)

The language use in a few of the instances above resembles reporting on war. Phrases such as "rhino war" (6.2.2); "the war is ratcheting up" (6.2.3); "fear of intimidation" (6.2.3); "fight to protect" (6.2.4) and "bust a group of poachers" (6.2.5) make it clear to the reader that there is a war going on. The journalist in 6.2.5 makes his negative feelings towards the poachers and what they do clear by referring to them as "thugs" in "the thugs opened fire" (6.2.5).

That there is a war going on is clearly reflected, as shown above, in the language of the news reports. There are two sides to this war: on the one side, the poachers who are killing rhinos for their horns, and, on the other, the conservationists who are trying to prevent the poaching of rhinos.

Walker and Walker (2017, 104) state that rhino poachers are "blatant criminals," not mere "starving park neighbours." According to Walker and Walker (2017, xxv) "[m]any poachers are experienced former militia who are well armed and ruthless." They also emphasise that these "criminals" are "highly skilled trackers" (Walker and Walker 2017, 104). The fact that the poachers are highly skilled and ruthless is reflected in the news reports, especially in the description of the weapons they use:

> (6.2.6) They have <u>automatic pistols</u> **[−app]** holstered on their hips. (Smillie 2012)

> (6.2.7) It is a new modus operandi where poachers come <u>armed with large-caliber hunting rifles</u> **[−app; +force]** and <u>drop rhinos with a single shot</u> **[−jud; +focus]**. (Smillie 2012)

> (6.2.8) <u>Sophisticated poachers using hi-tech equipment</u> **[−jud; +force]**, including helicopters from which to hunt down their <u>defenceless prey</u> **[−aff]** are clearly <u>in cahoots with organised international syndicates</u> **[−jud; +focus]**. (Witness 2009)

In 6.2.6, the journalist states that the poachers carry "automatic pistols." By adding the word "automatic," the journalist indicates to the reader that the poachers are serious; they are "professionals" and they come prepared. This view is supported by more examples. In 6.2.7, the journalist emphasises the weapons used by the poachers (as well as what these weapons enables them to do) through the use of graduation, by adding "large calibre" in "large-calibre hunting rifles," and "single shot" in "drop rhinos with a single shot." In 6.2.8, the journalist makes use of emphasis (graduation) by describing the poachers as "sophisticated" and their weapons as "high-tech equipment," supporting Walker and Walker's (2017, 104) claim that the poachers are highly skilled and not mere "starving park neighbours."

Because poachers are equipped with the latest high-tech weaponry, anti-poaching units and conservationists need to have access to such weapons as well. Anti-poaching units and conservationists are also well trained. This is reflected in the news reports as well.

(6.2.9)   The rangers who go after the poachers are <u>better armed than the average soldier</u> **[+aff]**. They carry <u>large-calibre assault rifles, with enough firepower to drop one of the big five</u> **[+aff; +jud]**, if need be. (Smillie 2012)

(6.2.10)   In the next few months, <u>an array of new hi-tech weaponry will be pitted against</u> **[+app]** <u>rhino poachers</u> **[−aff]** in the Kruger Park. (Smillie 2012)

(6.2.11)   There will be <u>more helicopters, spotter planes and even drones, which proved so successful in the hunt for Osama bin Laden</u> **[+app; +jud]**. (Smillie 2012)

In the cases above, the fact that anti-poaching units and conservationists are heavily armed and make use of high-tech weapons is expressed as positive by the journalists. Phrases such as "better armed" in "better armed than the average soldier" (6.2.9); "enough firepower" in "large-calibre assault rifles, with enough firepower to drop one of the big five" (6.2.9); "new high-tech weaponry" in "an array of new hi-tech weaponry will be pitted against rhino poachers" (6.2.10) and "more helicopters, spotter planes and even drones" (6.2.11) communicate the enormous efforts made by anti-poaching units, as well as conservationists, not only to protect rhinos from being poached, but also to catch the poachers and bring them to justice.

Rhino poaching statistics are another aspect of rhino poaching which evokes some emotion from the journalists in the corpus:

(6.2.12)   While poaching has declined in the Kruger National Park, it is <u>significantly up</u> **[+force]** in other provinces, <u>particularly in KZN</u> **[+focus]**. (Sekwela 2017)

(6.2.13)   Over the 70-day time frame, this means <u>more than three rhino a day</u> **[+force]** are being <u>slaughtered</u> **[−aff]** in South Africa. (Watson 2014)

(6.2.14)   According to the Department of Environmental Affairs' rhino statistics, <u>a record 191</u> **[+app]** suspected rhino poachers have been arrested this year. (Mngoma 2013)

(6.2.15)   While there are many different forms of poaching, from subsistence for the pot to the bush meat trade and organised gangs as described above, the recent <u>unparalleled and dramatic increase</u> **[+force]** in the number of rhino poached as well as the <u>hi-tech methods used</u> **[-app]** point to <u>more sinister forces</u> **[−jud]** at work. To put the scale of this problem into perspective, <u>in 2007 SA lost 13 rhino to poaching, by 2009 the number had reached 122</u> **[+focus]**. So far this year (as of the end of September) it is <u>already</u> **[+focus]** on 205. (Muir 2010)

If one considers the fact that during the past decade more than 7 000 rhinos have been poached, a staggering figure, it is not strange that poaching statistics often feature in the NewsBank corpus. It is also no surprise that journalists often employ the appraisal category of graduation (force and focus) to emphasise the rhino poaching statistics. Examples of force include "significantly up" (6.2.12); "more than three rhino a day" (6.2.13) and "unparalleled and dramatic increase" (6.2.15). Examples of focus include "particularly in KZN" (6.2.12) and "[s]o far this year (as of the end of September) it is already on 205" (6.2.15). By making use of the appraisal category of graduation, the journalists place emphasis on the significant number of rhinos poached as well as on the dramatic increase in these statistics over the past ten years.

Like the Sketch Engine Corpus, the NewsBank Corpus makes mention of the nationalities of the poachers. This is to be expected as, in my opinion, South African readers are aware (more than international readers would be) of the socio-economic situation of their neighbouring country, Mozambique, especially after the "brutal and destructive" civil war, which took place between 1977 and 1992 (Weinstein 2002,141).

(6.2.16)   Ndlovu, 38, and his two co-accused Sikumbuza Ndlovu, 37, and Forget Ndlovu, 49, <u>all Zimbabwean nationals</u> **[−jud]**, were arrested on June 17 in Grahamstown, for being in possession of a rhino horn linked to a poaching incident at Buckland's Game Reserve, where <u>a white rhino bull named Campbell was killed</u> **[−aff; +focus]**. (Marais 2016)

(6.2 17)   Ezemvelo spokesman, Musa Mntambo, said <u>the Mozambican was shot</u> **[−jud]** after he and two other suspects opened fire on KZN Ezemvelo Wildlife field rangers, who were responding to reports of two shots heard on Sunday afternoon. (Mngoma 2013)

(6.2.18)   In what has been hailed as a <u>groundbreaking verdict</u> **[+app]** in the fight against rhino poaching, the court found that Mawala, <u>of Mozambique</u> **[−jud]**, must have foreseen the possibility of the death of Mazivele when he conspired to hunt rhino at Ndumo Game Reserve in November 2011. (Sheik Umar 2013)

Whilst the Sketch Engine corpus only makes mention of Mozambique, the NewsBank corpus also refers to Zimbabwe. As is the case with the Mozambican situation, most South Africans are, in my opinion, equally aware of the current socio-economic circumstances in Zimbabwe. With shortages of food and petrol, "inflation rates hovering between 400 and 600% a year, [… and] unemployment and poverty at about 75%" it is understandable that Zimbabweans would be involved in the "lucrative business" of rhino poaching. (Dansereau 2005, 7) The inclusion, by the journalists, of the nationalities of the poachers in 6.2.16, 6.2.17 and 6.2.18 above, can, in my opinion, be seen as a form of the appraisal category of judgement. One can speculate that the mere mention of these countries (even if it is factual) in relation to rhino poaching could put the reader in a negative state of mind towards their fellow African neighbours. Xenophobic violence against foreign nationals in South Africa is very real and has increased since 1994. In 2008, anti-immigrant violence broke out in the Alexandra township of Johannesburg. "When the disturbances died down, some sixty-four people were dead, thousands displaced and others lost limb and livelihood" (Tafira 2018, 1). In August 2019, African migrants once again faced violence, looting and even death in a new wave of xenophobic attacks (Burke 2019). In the case of the examples above, I am of the opinion that the use of the appraisal category of judgement in news reports on rhino poaching might reinforce these beliefs among South African citizens. It might be best not to make mention of the nationalities of the poachers.

The examples above clearly illustrate that rhino poaching is an immense conservation problem. The solution is also not a simple one (Walker and Walker 2017, 99–131). This leads to the question of whether the public can and should get involved. The journalist in 6.2.19 below certainly thinks so:

> 6.2.19 The government, conservation bodies and the public at large <u>must join forces to put a stop to the scourge</u> **[−aff]** before it gets <u>completely out of control</u> **[−aff]**. <u>Tough action is required,</u> **[+aff; +force]** like that taken by field rangers in the Kruger National Park who shot and wounded a suspected rhino poacher a week ago. The rhino is one of South Africa's big five and we cannot sit back and watch it <u>being hunted to the brink of extinction once again</u> **[−aff; −jud]**. (Witness 2009)

In 6.2.19 above, the journalist urges the public to step up by joining forces with the government and conservation bodies. The journalist explicitly expresses his dissatisfaction with the status quo by the use of the word "scourge," reminding the reader of the pain and suffering that goes hand-in-hand with the act of poaching. This sense would have been lost with the use of other word choices such as "poaching" or "killing of rhinos," which readers have become accustomed to due to its frequency of use. The fact that the journalist disapproves of the current situation, and judges the general public for their lack of action, is expressed explicitly at the end of the paragraph with the inclusion of the phrase "once again." One can suggest that by including this phrase, the journalist is reminding the reader that rhinos (specifically the southern white

rhino) were once on the brink of extinction in South Africa. Only through an enormous conservation effort in the 1960s, and the collaboration of all sectors, did the rhino population grow "from 1 800 in 1968 to nearly 19 000 today" (Rademeyer 2012, viii; see also Walker and Walker 2017, 169). The journalist's use of the appraisal categories of affect and judgement in 6.2.19 shows that he feels very strongly that the public, together with the government and conservation bodies, should not allow this to happen ever again.

It is interesting that corruption within law enforcement does not feature in the NewsBank corpus which is made up of South African news reports only, while it does feature in the Sketch Engine corpus which contains mostly international news reports. One can only speculate about the reason for this. According to Walker and Walker (2017, xxv), South Africans are "accustomed to corruption being a part of every sector of society." One simply has to look at the ongoing Zondo Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture investigating "corruption and fraud in the public sector including organs of state" (South Africa 2018, 4) to realise that corruption does indeed run deep. The inclusion of information on corruption in news reports on rhino poaching could therefore potentially be unnecessary as South African readers may suspect or assume that it forms part of the poaching situation.

The examples above clearly illustrate that emotive language is present in the news reports in the NewsBank corpus. In this corpus, consisting of South African news reports only, the emotive language reflects the amount of violence involved in the poaching of rhinos. This is done through the description of the weapons used by poachers as well as their modus operandi. The mention of the nationalities of the poachers also plays a part in influencing readers and ultimately changing their behaviour by motivating them to get involved in the fight against poaching.

7. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to indicate whether and how emotive language is used in news reports on rhino poaching. By using Martin and White's (2005) appraisal theory to analyse the data collected in two corpora, it was revealed that emotive language is indeed present in news reports on rhino poaching.

After analysing the data from both the Sketch Engine and NewsBank corpora, it can be concluded that emotive language is employed by journalists reporting on rhino poaching for the following five reasons:

1. To inform the reader of the current situation regarding rhino poaching by providing up to date statistics of poached rhinos.
2. To make the reader aware of the excessive economic value of rhino horn, resulting in rhinos being seen as a commodity.

3. To inform the reader of the fact that rhino poaching is a form of organised crime executed by highly trained individuals.
4. To expose corruption within law enforcement and conservation organisations, especially for the international audience.
5. To call the reader, especially the South African audience, to action in order to save the species from extinction.

It is true that many other news reports intend to inform their readers, to make them aware of situations and to expose certain events. In the articles analysed in 6.1 and 6.2, emotive language is used to emphasise functions 1 to 4 above in order to achieve the outcome stated in function 5—to call the reader to take a stance against rhino poaching.

Considering the poaching statistics presented in Figure 1, it is clear that conservationists from Africa cannot stem the tide on their own, even if poaching statistics are slowly decreasing. In 2018, 769 rhinos where poached in South Africa, which represents a decrease of 259 from 2017. This makes 2018 the first year since 2012 that fewer than 1000 rhino were poached. The decline in the poaching figures might indicate that anti-poaching efforts are having an effect. On the other hand, it could also mean that with fewer surviving rhinos in the veld, it is getting more difficult to locate rhinos for poaching. Walker and Walker (2017, 34–35) insist that new approaches need to be found. They call on the public to get involved, and on the international community to apply pressure through "treaties and enforcement actions." The use of emotive language in news reports on rhino poaching might prove helpful in this regard.

Macagno and Walton (2014, 5) explain that emotive words "influence the way we regard the reality they represent. They affect our decisions concerning their referents." Macagno and Walton (2014, 5) further state that emotive words are "extremely effective instruments to direct and encourage certain attitudes and choices." The use of emotive language in news reports on rhino poaching does not match the crime—it never could— but it could lead to a change in the public's behaviour in answer to Walker and Walker's (2017, 34–35) call to become involved in the conservation effort.

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