

**Investigating the Use of Interactive Media in  
Environmental Activism: The case of Greenpeace  
Turkey**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the importance of interactivity within the field of environmental activism regarding the usage of cultural, political and social discourses in constructing web interface. This evaluation was made on the Greenpeace/Turkey website, (<http://www.greenpeace.org/turkey/tr/>) by focusing on the design and linguistic structure of the site. The examination has been carried out through the usage of semiotic analysis and critical discourse analysis. Additionally the level of interactivity of the website of Greenpeace was evaluated by interviewing Greenpeace members and employees.

It was found that existing social, political and cultural discourses which have impacts on environmentalism in Turkey such as effect of modernization and westernization also influenced the cyber environmental activism in Turkey.

The results of semiotic analysis, critical discourse analysis and interview show that there is a lack of mutual understanding in terms of design and content of the Greenpeace website between the users of the site and the organization. While the design of the Greenpeace website tries to create a user friendly atmosphere, the language used to explain nuclear activities are distanced from the users. Furthermore the results indicate that the potential power of interactive media is not currently properly used by the designers and member of the Greenpeace website and the users of the site.

Results of the research show that users of the Greenpeace/Turkey website ask for an educational part which would discuss nuclear power disadvantages and substitutions for it.

**Keywords:** Interactive media, environmental communication, web design, modernization, cyber activism.

## ÖZ

Bu çalışma çevreci aktivizm alanında interaktifliğin önemini web arayüzü oluştururken kültürel, politik ve sosyal söylem bakımından incelemektedir. Bu değerlendirme Greenpeace Türkiye sayfasının tasarım ve dilsel yapısına odaklanarak yapılmıştır. Çalışmada semiyolojik analiz ve eleştirel söylem analizi kullanılmıştır. Buna ek olarak Greenpeace web sitesinin interaktiflik düzeyi üyeler ve çalışanlarla yapılan görüşmelerle değerlendirilmiştir.

Çevreciliği etkileyen modernleşme ve Batılılaşma gibi unsurların Türkiye'deki sosyal, politik ve kültürel söylemin sanal çevreci aktivizmi de etkilediği görülmüştür.

Semiyolojik analiz, eleştirel söylem analizi ve görüşmelerin sonuçları göstermiştir ki websitesi kullanıcıları ve kuruluş arasında Greenpeace'in tasarımı ve içeriği konusunda görüş birliği yoktur. Greenpeace web sitesi kullanıcı yakın bir atmosfer yaratmaya çalışsa da nükleer enerjiyle ilgili dil kullanıcılar tarafından mesafeli bulunmuştur. Sonuçlar Greenpeace üyeleri, tasarımcılar ve siteyi kullananların interaktif medyayı etkin biçimde kullanmadıklarını göstermektedir.

Çalışmanın sonuçları göstermektedir ki Greenpeace web sitesi nükleer enerjinin dezavantajlarının ve alternatiflerinin tartışıldığı eğitici bir içeriğe ihtiyaç vardır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İnteraktif medya, çevreci iletişim, web tasarımı, modernleşme, sanal aktivizm.

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## LIST OF ABBRIVIATIONS

CDA.....Critical Discourse Analysis

NEP.....New Ecological Paradigm

TEMA .....Türkiye Erozyonla Mücadele Ağaçlandırma ve Doğal Varlıkları  
Koruma Vakfı

WWF.....World Wildlife Fund

TBMM.....Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi

FTM.....Field, Tenor, Mode

# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Interactivity in Environmental Activism

Throughout the years a lot has changed in the field of environmental activism. The little spark of “Earth Day” in 1970 started a journey that has accomplished many tasks today which seemed impossible at that time. However, these accomplishments are also due to the expansion of international networks and easier communication between activists. (Brain Tokar, 1997, p.1)

One of the important keys which have influenced the growth of environmentalism was and is the Internet and the opportunities that it has brought to the realm of environmental activism.

Even though with usage of new media activist brought new opportunities for communicating environmentalist issues, the content and the structure of what has been communicated before has not changed. Therefore, many scholars have criticized new media as a medium with high potential, yet less effective because of the hierarchical structure between users and the source of information. (Killingsworth, 1999)

In order to have a good understanding of how this hierarchy is created, we should realize the different elements which have influenced it. As any other medium, new media is the product of culture; therefore, it is subjected to the conditions surrounding it. This means that it cannot stand alone outside of the cultural, the social and the political relations which surround it. Therefore, it is also related with the older forms of media whether in terms of the content or in terms of how the information is communicated.

In the case of environmentalism, historically, ‘Westernization’ has had a great impact on the way environmentalism is communicated. Urbanization, as one of the key elements of westernization, separated humans from nature; humans have materialized nature and subjugated nature as our tool for improvement. Nevertheless, environmental philosophy, ironically created after hundreds of years of urbanization, carries the values of it as well. It might criticize human’s actions toward nature, but generally separates humans in relation to the environment surrounding us.

Turkey is one of the countries which have been the subject of many studies because of the way it was transformed and urbanized. Some studies criticized its path while other ones praised it. But, what is important in this research is how urbanization has influenced the contemporary environmentalism movements in Turkey. In the next sections, I will explain what the main aim of this research is and what has been gathered as the result of this study.

### **1.1.1The Problem**

With the rise of awareness regarding the negative influences of industrialization on nature, environmentalism is growing to be one of the hot topics of contemporary academic research. However, the subjects of many of these studies are rarely

concerned with the cultural studies and social aspects of environmentalism and how it is related to the everyday culture of humans. Only during recent years, has environmental communication gained importance within the field of environmental activism. Environmental communication is a multidisciplinary field whose major concern is about how environmental activism's values have been shaped in the context of social and cultural relations. However, while this matter has been studied in several contexts of communication and media studies, such as films and still images, new media has not been studied in depth.

Online communication undoubtedly is one of the most powerful sources of communication in the last decade especially if its material is related to activism or questions stemming from this ideology. This is because the internet has not yet been fully dominated by a central authority and still has the potential to alter monopolistic resources. This research gives us the chance to study the Greenpeace website which operates in Turkey from a multimodal aspect to understand the possibilities and meanings that website of Greenpeace/Turkey communicates with its users.

### **1.1.2 The Proposed Solution**

While analyzing the design and interactivity of the Greenpeace/Turkey website, through the information that was gathered from semiotic analysis, critical discourse analysis and interviews, I noticed a gap that exists between the users of the Greenpeace website and the organization. The perspectives of the users and the organization were not matching on many points, but, of course, they also had many points in common. One attempt to improve this issue is to build a stronger and more integrated relationship between the organization and the users. However, it is important to realize that this attempt should be undertaken by both sides. Greenpeace can expand its space for user interaction, and create more possibilities for users to

modify the narrative of the site and the users also need to expand their perspectives regarding what can be a better solution for the environmental problems around them as well as localize their action and constantly be in contact with the Greenpeace/Turkey website.



## **Chapter 2**

### **THEOROTICAL FRAMEWORK and LITERATURE**

#### **REVIEW**

##### **2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter the aim is to explain the theoretical framework of the research by a wide review of the material that crosscuts the grounds of environmentalism and new media, and also to discuss the contemporary studies in each field. In addition, this chapter looks over the communication theories within the field of environmental activism. Later on, the research focuses on the environmental web sites which are considered as being one of the most influential mediums in contemporary environmentalism discourses; therefore, it studies the relevant materials about websites and environmentalism and reviews the analytical methodologies that have been developed throughout the years in this field. This literature review studies the relevant material and theories that influenced the web-design and their relation to environmental activism and environmental communication.

After going through the materials written about the environmental issues in Turkey, I realized that the complexity and diversity of environmental discourses that exist in this region, causes environmental activity to have many branches within different political groups in Turkey. Yet, new media as the leading source of communication in environmental issues has not been taken into consideration in Turkey as much as it should be. This review tries to fill the gap between the environmental issues of

Turkey and the existing influence of the World Wide Web on environmentalism in Turkey.

### **2.1.1 Activism and Environmentalism**

Politics is not only what governments of countries use for ruling a country but also pervades the everyday life of each human, how we think, how we decide and how we act ( Wapner, ,1996,p.1). In this sense environmental issues are political.

Activism is one of the political collective actions of human agents developed for criticizing the authority of dominant politics. “Environmental activism is the combined political force of people who take action to protect the environment. Not content with passive empathy for environmental problems, the green movement is inspired by proactive opportunities to bring about its vision of a better world” (The Green Movement, 2011 para 2). The separation of environmentalist activity from governmental sources has created the spaces for independent voices to be heard and action to be taken on environmental issues.

Therefore, it is important to realize that although the political or intellectual thinking of each human being is very influential in creating a better world, for a political thought to be a collective action takes more than compassion and empathy for nature and the earth.

What motivates and strengthens a simple act of empathy into becoming a goal is the deep understanding and realization of the roots of human-centered theory and its relation with environmental issues. This matter will be discussed in more detail in the next sections. But mentioning it here is important because it points out the beginning of the field which has had a strong influence on contemporary environmentalism.

To start with, in 1970 Hannigan explained that a new movement arose and flourished within the field of environmentalism by the name of “Earth day”; year after year, this day appeared to gain more publicity and more participants. However, what actually, differentiates Earth Day from other former environmental activities is the symbolism of “day one” which was largely advertised by U.S media and stood for the new era of environmental activism. (Hannigan 1995, p.5).

### **2.1.2 Rise of Eco-Criticism**

As 1970 became the time for the new environmentalist and became more and more popular within society, questions arose between sociologists and scholars about how to articulate environmental issues within society and how the environment issues are linked to the previous social debates that had been studied by scholars, such as Hannigan. Even though sociologists such as Durkheim, Marx and Weber developed theories about the relation of society and humans and environmental sociology in their works, the English translation of their studies majorly neglected those parts. This was partly due to the biased and monopolistic dimension of American translators of the time (Hannigan 1995, p.5).

However it was not only before the earth day decades that theories related to the environmental issues and sociology had been ignored, but earth day was supposed to extend a white wash over bias and misrepresentation of the relation of human and nature to society.

As Brain Tokar argues, although many consider earth day as a sign for an important cornerstone in environmentalism, others criticize this day as another manipulated action of authority that used environmentalism issues for their benefit. He mentions Ramparts, one of the magazines of the time, which describes earth day as, “the first

step in a con game that will do little more than abuse the environment even further” (BrainTokar, 1997, p.1).

It was not as if there were no theories or studies on the relation between nature and humans, however, for a long time the need to evaluate and discuss these theories had been ignored due to bias.

It was within this time that the real question of the relation between environmental issues and sociology came up. Brain Tokar notes that in a response to a commercial earth day activist, organized events are, “More politicized local earth days of their own, these events focused on local environmental struggles, inner city issues, the nature of corporate power and other concerns that had been largely excluded from the official earth day events”. (Brain Tokar, 1997, p.2)

Therefore, different branches and points of view about environmental issues appeared and different political tendencies about environmentalism have been shaped. “The most ambitious was a demonstration in New York City called by members of the youth greens and left greens, with the aid of environmental justice activist, earth firstlers, ecofemenists, urban squatters, and many others” (Brain Tokar, 1997, p.2).

### **2.1.3 Official Environmentalism vs. Independent environmentalism**

Although the struggle between official environmentalists and independent ones continued, there was always a rise and fall in how these two groups interrelated with each other.

In 1990 after a celebration of earth day by millions of participants, many environmentalists pushed the New York stock exchange for the new trade that capitalist corporations made with India which would cause more pollution. As Brain Tokar quotes from Gonzale, “certainly, those who sought to co-opt earth day into a media and marketing extravaganza, to make the public feel good while obscuring the corporate root of the earth’s pollution almost succeeded. It took angry Americans from places like Maine and Vermont to come to Wall Street on a work day and put the blame where it belongs” (Brain Tokar, 1997, p.2). After that incident the doubt about political interest of organizations such as national environmental organizations was raised. Many started to feel the lack of an inner voice for local environmental issues within the public.

The disappointment of positive actions from official environmentalists shaped new sorts of criticism by the local activists, who questioned the actions and politics of the official environmentalists.

Afterward, environmental activists started to question the revenue of official environmentalism, not surprisingly, the result was the realization of the high impact of corporate both on the policy and economic conditions of official environmental organizations, and this matter was even extended for some organizations, which caused them to reshape their structures to pay more attention to the corporations. (Brain Tokar, 1997, p.2)

The realization of all these incidents in the undergoing corporate manipulation and domination on the decision making for the campaigns of official environmentalists

forced independent activists and scholars to socially and structurally evaluate the relation between humans and nature and the main concept of environmentalism.

#### **2.1.4 Theoretical Stand-points of Human/Nature Relations**

Rethinking of the relation between society and environmental issues has been debated by many scholars. But, as we explained before these research and studies never extended or flourished because of the big influence of capitalist policy and the interest that it gains dominating nature.

Theoretically, there are a variety of studies which are influenced by the socio ecological theories of Marx, Durkheim and Webber. Each of these scholars' theories branches out to different social theories. One can mention the New Ecological paradigm of Dunlap and Catton who were influenced by the sociological theories of Durkheim, on the other hand, Weber's sociology affected works of Scheinberg and Murphy. While Scheinberg's environmental-sociological works were identified as Eco-Marxist, Murphy developed the Risk society theory and "irrationalities of rationalization of industrialized capitalism" (Konak, 2010, p.1)

Many scholars had been revising this field while environmental issues increased day by day and influence of societies and human actions on nature became more obvious. Another theorist which had a great influence on the field of environmental sociology was Hanningan. He argued that historically, there are two stages which can explain the interconnection between society and the environment. The first connection shows us society as a part of a natural force and the second connection shows us nature as a tool for society's progress and development. Analyzing these two perspectives will help us to understand different aspects of environmental activity within recent years and the consequences of those actions.

For a while, geography as part of the environment had a certain effect on how a society was shaped. Hanningan points to Buckle's theories on this matter, who strongly believed on considering the societies as a creation of humans and humans as a part of nature therefore there must be a reasoning in the rules of nature that explains societies. (1995, p.6)

What he believed was that if human are a part of nature then the product of humans is a part of nature too. In this sense if society or human agents were more intelligent and stronger than the nature surrounding them, they would replace it.

*Understanding society as a part of natural forces*

A theory which was influential in understanding society as part of nature noted several kinds of relations between geographic and environmental changes, human and society related parameters such as climate changes and intelligence. As Hanningan interprets Huntington "...attempt to prove that the rise and fall of entire civilizations such as that of ancient Rome follow the shifts of the climate zones in historical periods". (1995, p.6) as we can see, he believed in the direct influence of nature on human conditions.

Another theory of interrelation of environment and society was highly influenced by the Darwinist concept of evolution. As Hannigan notes "In Darwin's theory, those plants and animals which are best suited to adapt to their environment survive, while those which are less equipped perish" (1995, p.7)

This theory actually was much closer to the theory of Buckle who notes that if humans and society are a part of nature, they are stronger since they are best suited to survive.

Although these theories had their followers in their own time, when the question of the foundation of sociology had been raised, eventually these theories had to be reconsidered too.

Many sociologists had come to accept psychology as the foundation of sociology in place of physics, or biology...increasingly, the failure of social Darwinism, and to a lesser extent the inability of geographic determinism to ever get off the ground. Lead to a strong aversion to explaining things in a way that used biological environmentalist explanations. (Hanningan, 1995, p.7)

*Understanding nature as a tool for societies progress and development*

The second way of interrelating sociology and environmental matters is what Hanningan calls “the world-view of sociologists themselves”(Hanningan, 1995, p.8).

These parts of Hanningans work is more related to the contemporary studies of environmental sociology, which as I mentioned before, argues within the discourses of Neo and eco-Marxism. Some sociologists criticize human societies as a separate part of natural principles and believe that humans dominated the rest of the nature; however, at the same time they never completely rejected the source which causes this domination. (Hanningan, 1995, p.8)

The progress of the use of technologies for improvement of society can be clearly sensed in the process of modernization, which was a transformation of society from a traditional way to the modern way of doing things by means of technology. This transformation was not only influential based on using technology but also on the modernization process of one –self that had an agenda of letting go of the conventions and welcoming modern thought. This process was not only obvious within societies from 1955 to 1975 but also was tangible at the intellectual level of



each self which was briefly passing by the traditional and shifting to the modern way. As Hanningan argues, many third world countries were left behind within this transformation because of “hollow-shells, lacking the institutional structures which make a nation viable and effective socio-political and economic enterprise”. (Hanningan 2006, p.4)

What is problematic in the argument of Hanningan is the separation of the world based on the economic and political interest and creation of a binary opposition. The usage “Third world country” places the east against the west and leaves no space for an alternative approach to grow and re-articulate both perspectives (east and west). As Coronil explains, “How to represent the contemporary world? Maps have often served as a medium for representing the world as well as for problematizing its representation” (1996.p, 52)

Daniel Lerner argues that, in order to gain acceptance for modernization (industrialization) within villages the logic of modernization needed to be accepted and understood by the local people, also the progress needed to be made in a way which people would assume the transformation happened because of their own decisions rather than an outsider’s effect. Therefore, media had a key role in creating an atmosphere of the illusion that the local people are in the positions of leaders and are making decisions about their own society. Although Lerner’s argument has an orientalist tendency over the modernization process of third world countries, still the hegemonic parameters of modernization has been intellectually challenged. Especially the matter of the influence of factories within the progress of modernization, which indeed can be easily compared with the transnational company’s role in society in contemporary global discourses

Following Lerner's discussion, Konak points to Murphy's theory which initiated from the works of Weber. Murphy believed that capitalism and high demand of production is the fundamental cause for all the environmental problems. Later works of Murphy and his colleagues such as John Bellamy Foster and James O'Connor shaped what is known today as the New Ecological Paradigm (NEP).

While Murphy's theory identifies capitalism as responsible for the environmental problems, Berk as one of the scholars whose socio-ecological theories was influenced from the works of Weber, relates contemporary environmental issues to the culture that was shaped under the impact of modernization. However, he also sees the solution of the environmental issues within the same culture. He argues that modernization increases awareness of the citizens about environmental problems that they might face due to the progress of modernization and compels the citizens to think of a solution for these problems. He identifies these societies as risk societies (Konak, 2010).

### **2.1.5 Environmental Communication**

What distinguishes environmental communication within the environmental discourses is the post structural view of the matter of environmental issues; in this sense what environmental communication mainly focuses on is the questioning of the master narrative structure of the solutions that had been suggested and studied by environmental organizations, activists, and scholars. "Environmental communication is a field within communication disciplines, as well as a meta field that cuts across disciplines. Research and theories within the field are united by the topical focuses on communication and human relations with the environment." (Littlejohn, 2009, p.344), the post structural method of environmental communication enables the discussions and theories of this field to move across any necessary discipline to

reshape and recreate how society and humans build their relations with the environment. “Scholars who study environmental communication are particularly concerned with the ways people communicate about the natural world because they believe that such communication has far reaching effects at a time of substantially human-caused environmental crises” (Littlejohn, 2009, p.344).

This perspective of environmental communication studies extends the roots of environmental issues to question theories and actions which were never considered to be influential on this matter. Yet environmental communication, similar to other disciplines of communication, has a system of presentation, in the context of manipulated media.

Central to environmental communication theory are these assumptions: the ways we communicate powerfully affect our perceptions of the living world; in turn, these perceptions help shape how we define our relations with and within nature and how we act toward nature. Thus, environmental communication scholars often speak of communication as not only reflecting but also constructing, producing, and naturalizing particular human relations with the environment (Littlejohn, 2009, p.345).

Because environmental communication research looks at human society as well as the natural world beyond the human, many environmental communication scholars are interested in studying discourses, informed by post-structuralism as well as disciplines such as scientific studies and cultural studies.

Littlejohn explains that “Informed by these traditions, many environmental communication scholars view our systems of representation as both symbolic and material” (2009, p.346)

Articulation of the relationship between representation and perception from poststructuralist studies creates an unavoidable system resembling a web between environmental communication studies and post-structural theories. Therefore, it is very important to take a glance at these two concepts, if one wants to do research regarding the environmental communication.

### **2.1.6 Language and Environmental Communication**

What language does is not only enable us to communicate and understand each other but also creates a system of knowledge and gives value to every subject that we know. Hence, it would be impossible for us to communicate outside of that system. Making an effort to understand the knowledge creating structure within this system, can be helpful in seeing the influence of other powers which shapes the meanings of words. Synder argues that

Words are used as signs, as stand-ins, arbitrary and temporary, even as language reflects (and informs) the shifting values of the peoples whose minds it inhabits and glides through. We have faith in 'meanings' the way we might believe in wolverines- putting trust in the occasional reports of others or on the authority of once seeing a pelt. But it is sometimes worth tracking these tricksters back (Synder, 2000, p.170)

The only way that environmental communication can exist is indeed through a system of a language that human beings once created. But there are certain critiques of this system which have been studied and researched by many scholars.

Environmental activism is one of the fields which grew through the realization of the consequences of human's actions toward nature, as any other activism which has been born to alter the dominant ideology of the time. Environmental activism also needed to be analyzed and studied within the context of power-relation structure and the hegemonic system that comprises that structure. It is not possible to ignore this

system, yet, if one wants to make a collective action of decreasing human's destructive way of behaving toward nature, one must first deeply understand the relation of humans and nature within a system of representations.

The constructed relation between humans and nature is one of the first issues that needs to be evaluated in formatting an alternative environmental activism. How does our system of knowledge grow through the everyday culture of people? And how does that system affect the dominant power? Therefore, not only does the language need to be studied but also do the consequences of the methods of using it within the everyday life of citizens need to be evaluated. As Japp discusses,

Our games, our sporting, activities, our lifestyle choices are connected to the availability and utilization of nature. Thus, the languages and images of popular culture situate humans in relation to natural environments, create and maintain hierarchies of importance, reinforce extant values and beliefs, justify actions or inactions, suggest heroes and villains, and create past contexts and future expectations (2002,p.4) .

Regarding this matter Pezzullo notes that “Because environmentalists do not exist in vacuums, popular culture is a telling site of analysis for environmental communication scholars” (2006, p.25)

Environmentalism that has been shaped within this culture needs to be analyzed, as mentioned before many environmental values that have been promoted within this context are the topic of investigation in terms of the mono-political vision that they deliver. As Littlejohn and Foss describe,

Many environmental theories include the assumption that human representation of nature, by the verbal or-nonverbal, public or interpersonal, face to face or mediated communication are interested. This in part, means that communication about nature is informed by social, economic and

political contexts and interest. These contexts and interests help to shape our communication, often in ways we are unaware of and direct us to see nature through particular lenses while also obscuring other views of nature (2009, p.345).

Which means that the representation of nature in the system of language and symbols is socially constructed and influenced by cultural factors such as economy, politics, and public or private spheres. According to Littlejohn there is a variety of factors within everyday culture which shapes our perception about nature and also, how we communicate about it. But generally speaking these processes are invisible to us; however, they control our vision about nature surrounding us. (Littlejohn, 2009, p.344)

The theories that scholars use to investigate these assumptions range widely in their epistemological orientation because human relations with nature are negotiated within cultural communication, mass media public communication, interpersonal communication, popular culture, and so forth. Environmental communication theory draws from cultural theory, rhetorical theory, social movement's theory of pop culture, and many other areas.

### **2.1.7 Rhetorical Analysis in Environmental Communication**

Different methodologies have been applied by different scholars to analyze the existing system of communication in environmental communication, although each medium delivers and effects the users in its own way, one thing is important to remember. The system of communication works as a web and therefore, in analyzing one medium there is a system of language which has been wide spread throughout that web. Rhetorical analysis provides the chance for the researchers to see the connections within that web and follow structural strings that interconnect the whole system. As Herndl and Brown describe,

the environment is not a thing that you could go out and find in the world. Rather, it is a concept and an associated set of cultural values that we have constructed through the way we use language. In a very real sense, there is no objective environment in the phenomenal world, no environment separate from the words we use to represent it. We can define the environment and how it is affected by our actions only through the language we have developed to talk about these issues. (2000, p.3)

As rhetorical theorists have long argued, what we know, how we know it, and who can we speak to about it are largely determined by our language. There are two ways of creating meaning for the words like nature and environment, one passed through the gatekeepers of science, such as biology, and others are values that we come to believe because of the influences of culture, genres, media, and institutions. (Wapner, 1996, p.3)

Following the same point but from a more deconstructive aspect, Littlejohn and Foss note that “the word environment is a symbol we dominantly use in Western culture to describe the natural world and it is a way that connotes a material nature that surrounds us and is separate from us. The symbol, or metaphor of environment is not only shaped by material and symbolic Western historical and contemporary ideas of an action toward nature” (2009, p.346) which makes us to see human as separate and most of the time dominant of the supposed nature.

Gandy argues that “a central element in growth of radical epistemological doubt concerns the questioning of environmental rhetoric and an emphasis on the language of environmental discourse” (2000, p. 154). In another sense how we communicate about environmental issues has recently started to be seen as an anthropocentric approach which has been highly influenced by western culture; now “nature is portrayed as a “quasi-object” traversing both the physical world and cultural

discourse, thereby blurring the subject-object distinction that permeates in western intellectual thought” (2000, p.155) .

Although the known environment is constructed in a series of social relations and understandings, not all the cultural definitions of environment place humans at the center of power. It is not only the communication about nature that should be investigated, but also the domination of monopoly and the widespread use of one ideology needs to be studied and investigated too. In the next section this theory has been studied in the context of cultural recognition in the field of new media.

### **2.1.8 New Media and Environmental Communication**

New media is considered to be one of the powerful tools that enable individual voices to be heard all around the world. The new communication technology not only has the potential for reshaping the existing discourse about environmental communication, but also has the potential for motivating and pushing passive users to the level of participation. As Matthews argues,

New media is helping environmental activists to combat the powerful propaganda and immense resources of the old energy economy. Although environmental groups cannot outspend or outmaneuver entrenched economic interests, the adoption of new media levels the playing field and democratizes the debate ( “New Media and the Environmental Movement”, 2011, para.1)

However, while Matthews’ argument mentions the potential power of the new media, he rarely discusses in what ways the new media can be influential on environmentalism. On this matter Sehmel points out that

Lack of access to information, time for researching on issues on ones’ own time for locating others with whom to discuss issues and time for formulating letters to send to decision-makers are merely a few of the barriers that prevent



environmental actions and participation in environmental decision making (2001, p.1).

This has been made a lot easier by the help of the World Wide Web and social networking. But one should also evaluate the intellectual decision making process in environmental participation.

It is not like one decides to be environmentally concerned and then visits an environmental website and takes action in some campaigns. However, this political decision making should grow from within one's intellectual reasoning and feeling of being responsible for the amount of negative effects that humans and societies have on nature. Such as dehydration of natural water springs, due to excessive usage of water which causes great amount of deforestation or melting of glaciers, due to global warming causes an increase in the sea water level also it reduces the habitat of some creatures like polar bears, seals, penguins etc.

Some studies show that the context of environmentalism, had been treated and promoted as popular culture, but as we discussed before, in order to be influential on changing how humans effect nature, one must first understand the epistemological problem which leads us to a false way of communicating about nature, which indeed has been ignored in many research about environmental issues.

Before starting to do research about the matter of environmental activism in websites, it is useful to study some of the materials which have been written about the contemporary usage of new media and its correlation with environmentalism. Later the research continues to evaluate the subject of environmental activism within the new media context.

There are several methodologies developed for analyzing the websites within discourses of communication studies, some of them are similar to other textual semiotic analysis, though in the case of cyber activism, theories about the public and private sphere and the argument about them becomes very helpful if one wants to analyze the participation process of new media users. Cyber activism considerably blurs the distinct categorization of each sphere.

In this research, this matter has been studied from two-different but at the same time inter-linked perspectives; first consumer (users) theories and influence on them in relation to cyber activism, second, textual and rhetorical theories and the relevant discussion to new media and cyber activism. These two perspectives have been evaluated from a critical approach of the contemporary world-wide-web context in this research.

Each of the theories have been discussed and compared in order to create a wide theoretical background on the subject of new media in contemporary environmentalist organizations.

#### **2.1.9 Environmental Activism and the Potential Influence of Web Design**

Usage of media is necessary for gaining publicity and attention especially for fields like environmentalism. “In moving environmental problems from conditions to issues to policy concerns, media visibility is crucial. Without media coverage it is unlikely that an erstwhile problem would either enter into the arena of public discourses or become part of the political process” (Haninngan, 1995, p.58).

Although media has an essential role on how the environmental issues are shaped, it is important to always ask how the environmental issues have been communicated

through the media. As mentioned before, the structure of communication within any media is interrelated to the source of information it comes from. For example, websites making possible the chances of interactivity with the user to be much higher while using a website for an organization. But, still the website of that organization follows a series of symbols and signs which are the identifiers of that organization.

By considering the former discussion on the matter of transnational corporate influences on the environmental issues and their manipulation on the creation of “Earth Day” and how the environmental problems are communicated based on those manipulations, the need for local voices, voices from within public start to be more and more audible.

However, as much as the emergence for an alternative voice for environmental issues is necessary, it is still important to understand the powerful influence that big environmental organizations have, such as the ability to handle big changes in environmental issues or attract new participants for their campaigns. One of the reasons for the strong influence is the way organizations communicate and the usage of new media within their systems, which are familiarized to the public because of their narrative structure.

Nevertheless, it is important to realize that websites are cultural products of social life and are understandable within a social context, because its context is the ensemble of the same symbols and language that are used to create other sources of communication and media.

Singh uses three different schemes to explain the cultural aspects of websites; these are: perceptual, behavioral and symbolic. He explains that perceptual analysis, investigates the materials on the web, based on the fixed theories of the society. While behavioral analysis, interprets the conventional and traditional symbols of the web and finally symbolic analysis looks to the semiotic language of the web. (Singh, 2002, p.35)

Considering Singh's theory, a website, whose contents are environmental values and activism, must have a complex structure in order to be influential and motivational so that it can influence its users and also encourage them to participate. Following this discussion, Sehmel argues that environmental websites inter-relate the intellectual works of each individual concerning environmental issues, and also the high usage of interactivity on the web interface, which is the core difference between online and offline communication, makes environmental websites a fascinating case to study (2001, p.1).

What Sehmel suggests is that analyzing the environmental websites can be very useful for both fields that it crosscuts; first, it shows us the potential of web based communication in changing the conventional way of environmental communication by including voices which had been oppressed for a long time and second it shows the possibility that the design of the websites could shake the hierarchical structure of official environmentalism. Although these chances exist in using a website for an environmental organization, there is always a level of grand narrative structure that exists on popular environmental websites. Kljigsworth and Jacosen, in explaining the narrative discourses, write that "Narrative modeling provides a useful tool in the rhetorical criticism of online communication. Narrative modeling, or narrative

imagination, is especially helpful not only in the critique but also in the design of communication that aims toward action outcomes.” (1999, p.167)

Though realization of our rhetorical analysis helps the designers and the organizations to provide a better communicational system between themselves and the user, this matter has not been at the core of web design from the very early years of this field. While other media have been analyzed carefully and in detail by many scholars, in terms of rhetorical and linguistic evaluation, websites were not exactly given much attention as an influential medium. Websites have many common points with films, news or books, yet, the narrative structure of websites is of important difference compared to other media. This difference can be explained by looking at the technological context of the websites. Hypertext, for example, changes the hierarchical system of the conventional narrative. Schiver takes a different view of the narrative structure of web design. As Kljigsworth and Jacosen quote from Schiver, “in the rush to design home pages and database of information, not many have spent time thinking about how people will actually experience their Web designs. That is, how people will understand and make use of the prose and graphics they find”. (1999, p.167)

The term ‘Experience’ has a wide meaning within the web content discourses. Because of the existence of hypertext and the sharing opportunity of the websites, the experience is shaped both by the users and the pre-existing narrative on the web.

While it is important to understand and use of signs and language which exists in environmental discourses, the effect of users’ participation and modification of the website’s narrative while using the website should not be underestimated.

Nevertheless, Schiver's theory needs to be analyzed from two different aspects; first from the level of cultural recognition on the website and second from the user's participation on the web interface.

Although numerous amounts of websites are being controlled by leading sources of power, there is no denying the fact that websites can have a positive influence on collective actions, yet much effort needs to be taken for the web-designers to achieve the real proposes of web (1999, Klijgsworth).

#### **2.1.10 Environmental Web Design: Interactivity and Functionality**

Taylor defines activists as “ a group of two or more individuals who organize in order to influence another public or publics through action that may include education, comparison, persuasion, pressure tactics or force” (2001, p.1). Development of interactive media and the creation of a virtual space provided an opportunity for the activists to extend their power and influence by forming an unconventional source of communication which would decentralize the monopolistic power of the authority in the mainstream media. Boost of the technological advancement in the field of communication brought a new wave of understanding to the relation between the audience and the main source of communication. It is fair to say that to some point it even redefined the notion of the passive audiences into active users.

As Hartley interprets Macluhans and Bagrits, “The instant inclusive embracement of automated technology, meant that the consumer also becomes the producer ‘fusing’ information and learning. The progression from the mechanical to the automated brought with it new possibilities for participation, our ability to make choices becomes a mean to empowerment”. (2002, p.120)

The realization of the shift in the role of the users of new media, from a passive stand point to a potentially active one, created a very different dimension in studying new media. In fact, it is the interactivity which produces an environment for the users to exceed the conventional pattern of communication, transforming it into a multidimensional form, where there is no linear way of constructing a communication system. Hartley continues by discussing the early works of McLuhan and Bagrit indicating that “interactive is an antidote to the factories of industrial revolution in which people’s work had to be adopted to accommodate machines. This imagery and language have reappeared in accounts of digital technology. By being able to direct, communicate and create through new interactive technologies, we are becoming ‘re-humanized’ (2002, p.120)

But it is important to note that not all the users of interactive media are having a role in constructing and reforming the content of this medium, Figure 1 is a very useful model for describing the level of the user’s participation in an interactive cyberspace.

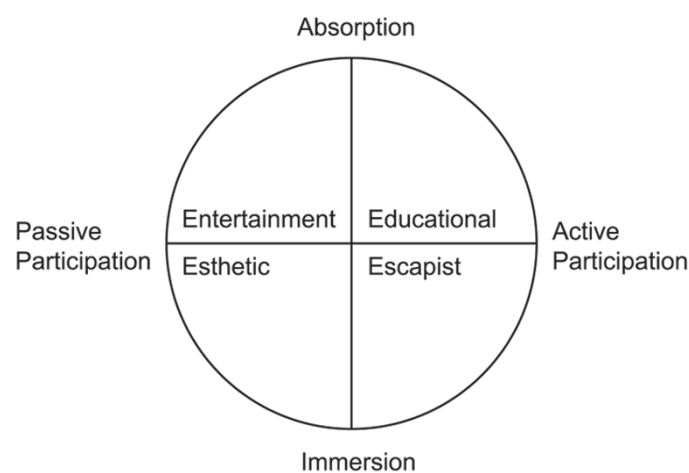


Figure 1: The experience realms (McLellan, 2000, p.176).

User's experience of an interactive webpage can be categorized, into two different levels; at the first level, users can experience the interactive elements, but cannot participate in the process of creation in the content of the website at this stage. Interactivity is generally used to increase the educational experience of a webpage because research has shown that interactivity very convincingly affects the process of learning and remembering. A good example for these types of WebPages is [www.waterlife.com](http://www.waterlife.com). This website has an educational aim developed to create knowledge regarding almost everything about the "water" and the different sociopolitical and cultural elements which effect "water".

However, the second level creates an atmosphere for the users, so they could take part in the creation of the content of the websites. This form of interactive media enables the users to share their intellectual work and be influential in the process of formation of the consequences that the webpage originally aimed for.

For instance, [www.hopenhagen.com](http://www.hopenhagen.com) can be seen as a good example to illustrate the latter kind. This website was designed originally for the Copenhagen Symposium taken place in the Nederland in December 7-18 2009. Users are constantly sharing their ideas and thoughts about environmental issues that are happening all around the world.

In the next sections I focus on the materials and theories which discuss the contemporary discourses of environmentalism and usage of websites for environmental activity in Turkey.



## **2.2 Background Knowledge about the Field**

As an Iranian communication student, who is concerned about the environmental issues in the everyday events of my life, I found Turkey as a neighbor of Iran and the bridge between the European continent and the Middle East with its wide range of environmental activity, quite fascinating to study.

Although I had some knowledge about the environmental activities in Turkey before I moved to Istanbul, it was only after a few months of living there that I became aware of its complexity and at the same time the popularity of environmentalism in Turkey especially in Istanbul.

### **2.2.1 Modern Environmentalism in Turkey**

Before starting to search the material available on environmental issues in Turkey, it is necessary to take a glance at the modernization process of this country because this process has had a strong impact on the contemporary practices of environmentalism in Turkey and more specifically Istanbul. As Voulvouli quotes from Kousis and Eder, “environment is not only an ecological problem it becomes a social or even societal problem at the end. It is a collective good that serves as a new medium in rearranging social relationships between groups that rearranging relations of power and restructuring forms of social inequality” (2009, p.24). Therefore if ones want to research the environmental problems within a specific region, it is necessary to study about how the social and cultural problems directly or indirectly caused environmental issues.

After the establishment of the republic of Turkey in 1923, Turkey has been going through a fast paced modernization and transformation in industry, economy and

social life. Yet, it was after Atatürk's death that the real change in cultural, political even cultural aspects took place. Voulvouli argues that,

Since 1938 Turkey has faced the transition to a multiparty political system and a sequence of political unrest repetitive election and *coups d'état* the same time there has been the economic opening of the country to the west, a critical moment of which was the Marshal aid received in 1948 with an obligation to be accountable to the donors. Turkey followed a certain kind of development, which throughout the years resulted in rapid economic and demographic changes, urbanization being the most apparent characteristics (2009, p.41).

But their developments, as expected, were not without their consequences. Urbanization, which pinpoints the human at its epistemological center, meant that a more urbanized Turkey resulted in more natural destruction.

Realization of environmental problems that humans have created and the study of their consequences gained popularity in Turkey and in many other countries which went through a process of modernization and have become aware of the fast pace of industrialization and its destructive methods of using natural resources. Therefore, for Turkey, like other countries, the need for a solution to deal with growing environmental issues is becoming more pressing every day.

On the other hand, the process of modernization dominated and ignored many of the methods that were practiced in Turkish culture to commune with nature. Indeed, nature has always had a strong role in Turkish culture.

Historically speaking, even before the Ottoman Empire, nature was revered in ancient Turkish culture. As Özdemir points out "The ancient Turks regarded mountains, rivers, brooks, springs, trees, and lakes as sacred" (2003, p.4). On the other hand after the entrance of Islam to Turkish culture and the formation of the Ottoman Empire, the relation between Turkish culture and nature gained more

importance. Regarding this Özdemir mentions that, “With the coming of Islam they (Turks) came to see nature as the realm in which the beautiful names of god were manifested” (Özdemir, 2003, p.4) But the core philosophy of modern thought ignored the ancient relations between humans and nature and considered them as traditional and backwards.

Due to this manipulation in thought, contemporary environmental communication in Turkey faces the problem of creating a strong bond among the activists. In another sense, because the cultural roots of environmental concerns were rejected in the creation of environmentalism in Turkey, formation of an influential method of communication became more difficult.

This matter can also be explained as a cause of the hegemonic approach of modernization. Özdemir criticizes the modernization process of Turkey and its influence on environmentalism. He argues that “although the Turkish republic replaced Ottoman Empire in 1924, it seems that some basic attitudes restricting the participation of individuals in the decision-making process remained the same” (Özdemir, 2003, p.4).

### **2.2.2 Environmental Organizations and New Media Usage in Turkey**

With the expansion of environmental problems in Turkey the number of environmental organizations grew as well. Currently, Turkey’s environmental problems consist of destruction of cultural and natural heritages, shortage of water, increase of industrialized areas, dehydration of forests, water pollution, soil pollution, and air pollution. In addition, the risk that government also takes by having nuclear power centers is another environmental issue in Turkey (Voulvouli, 2009)

But unfortunately, these are not the prime concerns of environmental organizations in Turkey. Voulvouli mentions that most of these problems are still not considered to

be fatal because of western philosophy and its influence on environmentalism in Turkey and the values that it promotes are still considered to be of capitalist interest. (Voulvouli, 2009)

What Voulvouli discusses here, is the matter of the dominant ideology that exists in educational campaigns about environmental issues. Although there are a variety of organizations that exist in the field of environmentalism in Turkey, it appears to be that they all have a common agenda in their environmental activity.

Therefore, the majority of the environmental organizations in Turkey follow the dominant ideology of the governmental method for dealing with environmental issues. An organization like Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion (TEMA) which is considered to be one of the most independent environmental organizations was founded by corporations, and philanthropies.

Another example is Greenpeace/Turkey which works for green movements and campaigns. Greenpeace applies global and political scientific research as the leading method for solving local environmental issues in Turkey.

Voulvouli also mentions that many of the environmental state departments still believe that there will be a solution within the capitalist system to environmental issues without dismissing the fast transformation in the industry, economy, and technology.

Considering the contemporary situation of environmentalist discourses in Turkey, importance for web-design and online communication for this field. I saw lack of

research and studies on the matter of how organization websites like Greenpeace/Turkey communicate environmental issues with its users. Although organizations like Greenpeace and TEMA are influenced by traditional values of environmentalism and their approaches are based on scientific research and as Voulvouli recalls western philosophy of environmentalism, it is important to not be trapped in a system of binary opposition and the notion of Occidentalism. Indeed, it is important to invite a different approach which enables the environmentalist to acknowledge both an eastern and western perspective and features both positive attributes. (Coronil, 1999)

### **2.3 Greenpeace Anti -Nuclear Movement**

One of the main methods for producing electricity all around the world is nuclear energy, though whether this wide usage of nuclear energy would maintain its popularity between the countries is one of the core questions of many research and studies.

This matter has gained so much attention because of the protest of many people against nuclear energy and also the fact that producing it is quite costly and insufficient for many countries on a long term timeline (Birol, 2002).

During the past few years, demand for electricity has been increasing in Turkey. Due to this, the government had to import electricity from Georgia, Bulgaria and Iran, yet the scarcity of electricity was still obvious and thus the government arranged conditions so as to produce nuclear energy (Akkay, 2009). Adaman and Arset point out that “the Turkish government had plans for nuclear energy that dates back to 1970” (2005, p.105). In 1974, Akkuyu was chosen as the area for initial construction

of a nuclear plant. One of the first meetings which considered the question of the possible effects of nuclear reactors in that area took place in 1976, where the president of a fishing company discussed the negative effect of nuclear power with the local people.

In 1992, Turkish electricity institutions asked for evidence regarding nuclear power plants from the main producers of nuclear reactors. It was an important date for environmental activists, because it brought Greenpeace to Turkey to investigate the situation. Since then Greenpeace has started a campaign opposing nuclear power in Turkey.

#### **2.4 Greenpeace/Turkey Online Communication**

Analyzing the Greenpeace website of Turkey can be helpful in increasing the possibility for users such as independent activists, while using interactivity, to make changes. In order to have a wide perspective on how the Greenpeace/Turkey website is related to the cultural, political, and economic background in Turkey, there are methods that have been developed by scholars who study new media communications which question the narrative structure of the website and the usability of the web interface concerning interactivity. In the next chapter I am going to study these methodologies and explain how they might be useful for my research.

## Chapter 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### **3.1 Toward a Multimodal Approach of Interactive Media Analysis**

In recent years, concerns about environmental issues have taken the interest of many social activities, media and organizations. Each part has been playing a strong role in the improvement of the common knowledge of the people about what has been happening to nature due to human unawareness and due to the carelessness they show while they gather natural resources. Lack of awareness about the correct ways of using the environment not only has destructive effects on natural resources but also creates many problems within society while we face any sort of natural catastrophe. Therefore, communicating about how we should improve our knowledge regarding proper usage of natural resources is becoming more important day by day.

Considering the discourses and research regarding the potential of the World Wide Web on environmentalism, there are several methods developed for studying how environmental organizations' websites communicate with their users, such as semiotic analysis, critical discourse analysis, analysis of web interface, and interactivity analysis.

Since the focus of this study is to research the influence of social, cultural, and political values on environmental communication on the World Wide Web, I saw bricolage as a useful approach for gathering information for my thesis.

As Littlejohn noted the way we communicate about nature are highly influenced by the political, social, and economic values. These values are influential on how we perceive nature. Even though, often their influences are not observable to us but it limits our perceptions and dismisses the alternative methods on constructing the relation between human and its environment. (2009, p.345) Furthermore Littlejohn explains that

Because human relation with nature are negotiated within cultural communication, mass media, public communication, interpersonal communication popular communication and so forth, environmental communication theory, draws from cultural theory, media theory, rhetorical theory, social movement theory, pop culture theory, and many other areas. In this way, environmental communication researchers have accessed existing theories to serve as conceptual frameworks for their questions and studies (2009, p.345)

To analyze the Greenpeace/Turkey website, I applied: semiotic analysis, critical discourse analysis, and interviews, in order to have a more detailed understanding of the influence that the Greenpeace website's communications on environmental issues have on the user's participation and behavior.

The bricolage of discourse analysis, semiotic analysis of Greenpeace website and interview of Greenpeace members can create a solid understanding on the influence of internet on wide-scale environmental communication. (Lemke, 1999, p.1)



According to Killingsworth “experiences have a narrative structure, if websites are to capture and or conform to that experience designer must cultivate a narrative imagination” (1999, p.168). While analyzing communication methods of a website, there are different factors which need to be considered; narrative structure, certain usage of language and designing principles.

### **3.2 Greenpeace Online Environmental Communication**

This chapter discusses the approaches that I used to analyze the narrative structure, the design elements, and the usage of language. It also discusses why they are useful methods for analyzing the Greenpeace/Turkey website. First, I analyzed the web pages of Greenpeace/Mediterranean/Turkey from a social semiotic perspective in general, and then focused on semiotic analysis of one of its campaigns, which opposes the construction of nuclear power plants in Turkey. Then I picked two articles published in the “Nükleersiz Gelecek” (Future without Nuclear) webpage concerning the recent nuclear accident in Fukushima, to apply a critical discourse analysis regarding to usage of language and the political stance of the Greenpeace organization. Finally, I conducted an interview with the members and users of Greenpeace website, to get a good understanding about the users’ opinion of Greenpeace/Turkey.

I used qualitative methods to examine the possible influences of signs, language and interactivity on the Greenpeace Turkey website on the user’s behavior. The main aim of this research is to analyze the potential of a different usage of interactive media in effecting the user’s behavior toward online environmental activism concerning their social, cultural and political relations. For example how does the commenting feature of the Greenpeace/Turkey website influence the level of participation of the users in

Greenpeace campaign, or in what level cultural recognition of the Greenpeace/Turkey website influence its usability for the environmentalist.

I developed questions regarding the aim of this research concerning two factors, First, the theoretical standpoint of young environmental activists and their relation to environmental cyber activism. Second, the users' behavior toward Greenpeace/Turkey's online communication.

1-Where does established Environmentalism stand in Turkey in terms of environmental communication and usage of new media?

2-How does youth environmental activism integrate with the Greenpeace/Turkey website?

3-What is the Narrative Structure of the Greenpeace/Turkey website?

4-What level of participation does the Greenpeace/Turkey website provide for its users considering its narrative structure?

5-How does the design structure of the website influence the users, concerning the level of cultural recognition?

6-In what ways has the Fukushima tragedy influenced the oppositional campaign of Greenpeace regarding nuclear reactors in Turkey?

Although finding answers to the questions asked above was the ultimate goal of this research, there were obstacles in gathering this sort of data that needs to be considered. As mentioned before, to examine the online communication of Greenpeace/Turkey, semiotic analysis, critical discourse analysis, and interview were used to gather the data. However, while doing my research, there were certain problems that I faced which need to be mentioned.

### **3.3 Problems of the Approaches**

Starting with semiotic analysis, because of the multi-faceted and multi-disciplinary nature of the environmental organizations' websites, analyzing their web design in terms of narrative structure is, to a high extent, complex. Not to mention, finding connections of how the design is related to the narrative structure is at the same time complex.

While studying the Greenpeace/Turkey website, I developed discussions concerning the works of Barthes and Speronis on semiotic analysis of a website. The arguments analyze the meanings that can be created for the visitors of the site due to the usage of certain colors, symbols, and forms. Therefore, the discussions are in line with a high level of personal understanding of web design and its impact on users. As Neumüller argues, computer semiotics is essentially a theoretical approach to communication in that its aim is to establish widely applicable principles. (2000, p.60)

Briefly, if one wants to define semiotics, it is an approach which refers to the power of signs and the necessity of them for communication. Regardless, a sign can only reveal its meaning in relation to other signs which creates the network of language.

New London Group explains this matter as “language and other modes of meaning are dynamic representational resources, constantly being remade by their users as they work to achieve their various cultural purposes” (1996, p. 64). Semiology deals with signs, as Hartley explains “A sign has three essential characteristics:

- it must have a physical form,-you can see, hear, smell, and/or touch it
- it must refer to something other than itself;
- it must be used and recognized as a sign; that is, It must be an element in a shared cultural code and system.” (2002, p.209)

As for discourse analysis, one of the major problems of this approach is the difficulty of creating a thematic analysis in order to organize the research. Brain argues that discourse analysis is to an extent problematic for the researcher because he or she has to create a classification from the beginning without anything tangible in hand (2000, p.246).

There are several problems that one might face while gathering information through interviewing. For this research, one of the main problems I faced, while using this approach was the interpretation of the result, because environmental communication in its nature is critical, it is difficult to understand the dominant ideology and its hegemonic influence on how the values has been shaped for the interviewees.

### **3.4 Why to Use Semiotic Analysis, critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Interviews**

New media, or to be more specific the Internet, has played a critical role on how environmental communication has been widely spread between its users these days. Although many alternative and independent sources of media were found recently,

thanks to the possibilities of new means of communication, one shall not forget the strong influence of big environmental organizations and how they communicate environmental issues through their web pages. For instance, Greenpeace, World Wildlife Fund, and People for The Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) are some of the most famous global organizations which are actively operating in different regions of the world to not only increase the awareness about environmental issues but also to take action in preventing some of the activities of governments and transnational corporations. This research focuses on how Greenpeace communicates and improves the knowledge of the users of its web pages by means of new media.

### **3.4.1 Semiotic Analysis**

In order to understand how any text shapes convey meaning in its context, one should first try to understand what discourses it is referring to. By speaking of discourses here we refer to the linguistic structure and language of signs. One of the most influential analyses for understanding the structure of a text is semiotic analysis which has been used by many scholars of communication studies in past years.

I conducted a multimodal analysis of Barthes (1957) Mythologies theory and Speronis (2010) model to evaluate the process of creating meanings which characterizes Greenpeace's online environmental communication. The multimodal analysis attempts to identify the usage of semiotics by Greenpeace and to communicate environmental values.

However, in web communication, because of its nature of nonlinear-narrative structure, the possibilities of the meanings that a text can create is countless. Even when a specific text is placed in a specific context with specific users, then how that text has been structured influences mainly how users create the meaning of that text.

As Maier discusses, “Users become active designers of meaning” through four stages of meaning creation, “Experiencing the known and the new, analyzing functionally and critically, conceptualization by naming and with theory, and applying appropriately and creatively.” (2010, p.73). These four stages are created through the language and signs that exist in the context of the web interface and the interpretation by its readers, such as page layouts and colors, also, the web interface that users use to browse the web pages such as scrolling signs, maximizing and minimizing, and as for the language structure one can point out the grammatical structure of the text and the vocabulary that the page uses to communicate with its audience.

A way to define signs is to separate them into signifier and signified. Signifier stands for something which portrays the sign, and the signified stands for the point that the sign refers to (Grundy, 1994)

During recent years, environmental websites have had a steady rise in the sense of representing environmental activities all around the world. Therefore, the necessity of a systematic design for their webpage is becoming more and more of a requirement. In order to provide a more user friendly and functional web interface researchers studied the meaning and usefulness of semiotics in helping us to understand online communication. As Islam, Ali, Al-Mamnun, Islam argue, “design principles are semiotic by nature” (2010, p.46)

A semiotic analysis of a webpage can reveal different factors that influence the comprehension and communication of the web users. For instance, how some cultural parameters can be influential in an international environmental

organization's online communication or how the signs or the combination of the signs motivates the users to change their state from passive audience to active users?

This research aims to find out the relation of signs and user's participation of the Greenpeace/Mediterranean/Turkey website by focusing on the matter of the critical view of the Greenpeace organization regarding the subject of nuclear power plants in Turkey during the tragedy of the Fukushima nuclear accident in Japan.

To analyze the semiotic of the Greenpeace Turkey website, I started from a broad perspective and then focused on the nuclear campaign. I used a combination of Speronis (w-side), Barthes theories of semiotics

W-Side explores the different types of web design ontology that users face while surfing a web page such as,

- Topic ontology: information about a specific subject
- Internet ontology: Information about Internet and online discourses
- Website ontology: information that a website creates by itself
- Common sense ontology: Information which is specified for a group of people who share a common interest. (Islam, Al.-Mamnun andIslam, 2010)

On the other hand I used Barthesian mythical theories to understand the double side meanings of the signs. Barthes believed that no sign has been used in a context without an underlying meanings attached to it. "It can be seen that in myth there are two semiological systems, one of which is staggered in relation to the other: a

linguistic system, the language...and myth itself, which I shall call meta-language, because it is a second language, in which one speaks about the first” (Barthes, 1957, p.115). One can define these two semiological systems as the denotation and connotation meanings of a sign. I used these two systems to explain how the signs used in Greenpeace website shape the meanings

### **3.4.2 Critical Discourse Analysis**

One of the branches of discourse analyses, which not only studies the language by itself but also researches the relation between power structure and linguistic construction, is called critical discourse analysis.

As Fairclough argues in conducting Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) there is a need of detailed evaluation of the text if one aim is to find out about the genre and discourses that has been applied to shape a specific context, there are different approach that can be used in CDA regarding to the subject of the study, Fairclough notes that

Whether for instance one focuses on argumentation, narrative, modality, transitivity, nominalization, voice, etc. Some work in ‘critical linguistics’ (Fowler et al 1979) and CDA is particularly associated with Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday 1978, 1994), but that merely reflects the biographies of certain figures in the field. In principle any approach to linguistic analysis might be drawn upon (Fairclough, 2005 p.8).

The approach I used is combination of the Hallidayan model of CDA [Table 1] and Fairclough’s strategic critique theory while considering the social, political, and cultural context of Greenpeace/Turkey.

Hallidayan model categorizes the structure of CDA as context of culture and context of situation. Each of these categories also has their own subcategories. Context of culture is separated into ideology at the top and genre below. Genre is what the text



uses to achieve its purpose. Context of situation is shown by register, which consists of three factors: field, mode, and tenor.

Haig argues that “Ideology is taken here not just political ideology but a whole set of beliefs, ideas, and values that make up a person’s or society’s world-view” (2001, p.207)

Field points out the topic of the text; mode is the tone which is used to create the connection between text interpreters. Tenor describes the connection between the interpreters.

Table 1. Hallidayan Model for Critical Discourse Analysis

C O N T E X T	Context of Culture	Ideology		
		Genre		
	Context of Situation	Register		
		Field	Mode	Tenor
T E X T	Discourse Semantic level	Experiential function	Textual function	Interpersonal function
	Lexio Grammar Level	Transitivity System	Thematic System	Mood System
	Expression	Graphology/ Phonology		

Different style of critique can create different forms of discourse analysis however there are three forms which directly relate themselves to CDA, these critique consist of: ideological, rhetorical and strategic critique

Ideological critique focuses on the effects of semiosis on social relations of power, and rhetorical critique on persuasion (including ‘manipulation’) in individual texts or talk, what we might call ‘strategic critique’ focuses on how semiosis figures within the strategies pursued by groups of social agents to change societies in particular directions (Fairclough, 2005 p.12).

Since this research attempt to focus on the approach that Greenpeace/Turkey applies to communicate and pursuit its users, I chose “strategic critique” for conducting the CDA of the articles published on Greenpeace/Turkey website. Because the system of language’s constructivist conception and CDA’s practical orientation to address social problems, together they have been used in many spheres of social struggle. Also CDA is making us responsive to the language in which environmental matters are discussed. Such awareness can help us to understand the ideological presuppositions of the environmental text.

### **3.4.3 Interactive Evaluation and Interview**

In this section I will focus on the evaluation of the influence of interactivity on user's attitude toward the Greenpeace Turkey website and its campaign for opposing nuclear plants in Turkey. In order to understand this, I used interviews with the Greenpeace website’s users/members.

Before explaining about the questions that I ask the interviewees, it is useful to take a glance at the importance of interactivity and the methods that need to be used for evaluating the interactivity of a website.

Knowing that interactivity is one of the main features of the Internet from its early years, one can discuss how much it has influenced the organizations’ online communication with its users. The possibility of high speed exchange of data and the fact that users can directly influence the content of the text brought a new perspective to the means of communication compared to conventional media.

While interactivity seems to be one of the core attributes of the Internet, when it comes to describing it, unexpectedly very little attention was given to analyzing interactivity.

Interactivity has a wide context of definitions and networks in new media and communication studies, Liu states that, “Although people generally assume interactivity to be a desirable attribute, research on interactivity effects has produced ambiguous results” (2003, p.1). Further he explains that these sorts of gaps exist due to the lack of a certain understanding of interactivity itself, Liu argues that,

For example, it is uncertain whether interactivity really facilitates persuasion and whether companies should make the extra effort to make their marketing messages more interactive. To answer these questions and to better understand the interactive nature of the Internet, it is essential that interactivity can be accurately and consistently gauged. (2003, p.2)

Many of these contents of interactivity share two central characteristics of interactivity, reciprocal communication and control. Reciprocal communication mainly focuses on the information flow and exchange of information between users while describing the characteristics of interactivity which enables the users to have active influence on the content of the web.

For the interview questions I developed questions in three categories. The first one involves demographical questions, the second includes questions which are related to the theoretical and philosophical stand point of environmentalists in Turkey and the third questions the influence of the Fukushima accident and nuclear power plants in Turkey generally. In order to find out about the level of interaction between the Greenpeace/Turkey members and the organization website I interviewed Greenpeace

members who were between twenty five to thirty five years old. I chose this group of age because to understand where Greenpeace webs interfaces stand for young activist whose many task of their daily life are done through Internet, such as shopping or blogging. And what do they think about the design structure and functionality of the website. The interview questions can be found in Appendix A.

The sampling method I applied for the interview is the snowball method, which finds the subject to interview based on the recommendation of other interviewees. The reason for using this sampling method is because of the difficulty of finding environmental activists who are also active in cyber activism and also use the Greenpeace website for their activity.

## Chapter4

### FINDINGS AND DISSCUSSIONS

#### 4.1 Semiotic Analysis of Greenpeace Website

This section exhibits the result of the semiotic analysis of Greenpeace/Turkey website and evaluates the site, considering the theoretical approaches of semiotic analysis, to understand the connection between signs and meanings in online environmental communication. Semiotics deals with symbols in the form of text and pictures and also with their underlying meanings. Greenpeace / Turkey website makes an extensive use of signs in order to motivate it's users to take action in their campaigns. Nevertheless, semiotic analysis of Greenpeace/Turkey can be an effective tool for understanding their ideology and political strategies.

I started with a general evaluation of the website and then focused precisely on the web pages designed for the "Nükleersiz Gelecek" campaign of Greenpeace /Turkey, which are "Türkiye Nükleer İstemiyor" (Turkey doesn't want Nuclear) and "Ben de Eylemdeyim" (I am also on strike/in action).The approach is applied through combination of two perspectives: Barthes Denotation and connotation theory and the Speronis (W-SIDE) model.

## 4.1.1 Greenpeace Homepage

In the beginning I explained, in detail, every sign that is used on the webpage base on the Speronis model of Website ontology and then I moved to the discussion of what those signs represent in Barthes semiotic theory of denotation and connotations.

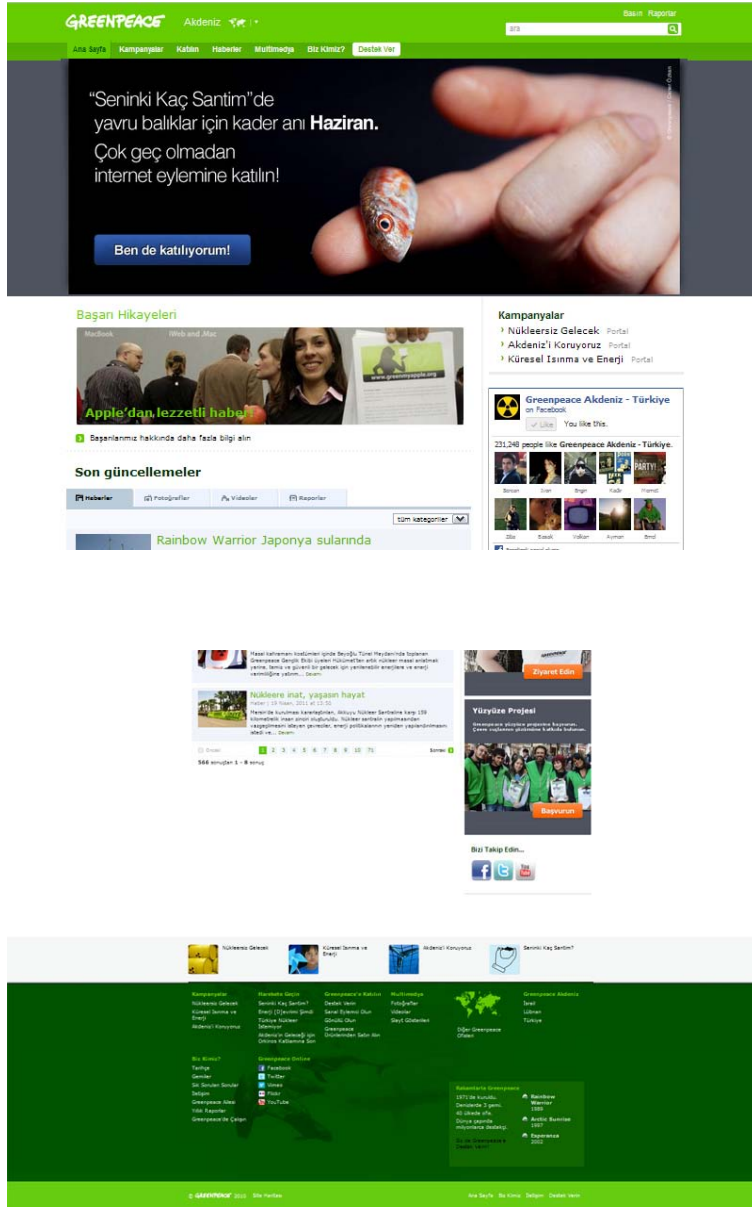


Illustration 1. <http://www.greenpeace.org/turkey/tr/>

Starting from the homepage of Greenpeace/Turkey [Illustration1], the design of the webpage layout from top to bottom consists of a header, main content, sidebar, and footer.

### *Header*

Header's background color is green, on the left side there is the Greenpeace logo in white color next to the logo there is the location signifier and a map which represents the five continents. On the right side of the header you can see the text "Basın" and "Raporlar", meaning Press and Reports. Below that there is a white box, written "Ara" or (Search) with a white magnifying glass surrounded by a small green box. This is the first table of the page at the top of the page. Directly below it, is the second table which has a darker green background and shows from left to right how the user can navigate the website. The navigation tool lists are "Anasayfa" (Homepage), "Kampanyalar" (Campaigns), "Katılın" (Join), "Haberler" (News), "Multimedya" (Multimedia), "Biz Kimiz?" (Who are we?), "Destek Ver" (Give Support). By rolling the mouse over each of these tabs, the text changes to a light green and a white box appears under the text.

Under the second table, a big portion of the page layout is reserved for a picture placed on a bluish grey background. This photo changes from time to time according to the activeness of the campaigns meaning that the more a campaign is gaining publicity the more the header banner displays that campaign.

### *Main Content*

In the main content, the table is divided into two rows at the top row "Başarı Hikayeleri" (Success Stories) and "Son Güncellemeler" (Latest Updates). Success Stories consists of green and black text with a picture of the most recent successes of Greenpeace. Latest Updates is divided into four different categories; News,



Photographs, Videos, and Reports. Each of these categories is highlighted by text on a blue rectangle with curved edges. The current category is highlighted by a darker blue background. Under each category there are a series of news articles listed by date, starting with the most recent. This layout applies to all subsequent categories and below each list the previous events are shown in chronological order.

### *Sidebar*

Sidebar of the homepage is also divided into two tables. First table focuses on campaigns and second one focuses on the web site's social media and online activities. Campaigns are shown with arrows and text. Each of these campaigns has been made into hyperlinks which direct the user to the main pages of each campaign; this is shown by the word Portal written next to each link. The second table is used for Facebook, Twitter, Online Donation, Online Shopping and Face to Face Project links. These parts are illustrated against a dark blue background with a relevant picture and orange box with text to help direct the user to where to click to give their support.

### **4.1.2 Semiotic Analysis of Greenpeace/Turkey Homepage**

Like any other media, websites also use a specific language and semiotics aimed to communicate with its audience. Websites use Page Layout, Colors, and Forms to accomplish this task. Each of these factors has its own semiotic principles and different usage of it causes the user to experience different emotions. For this research, my semiotic analysis extends from the page layout, to the colors and then to the forms.

While analyzing the layout of the Greenpeace/Turkey website one can easily see the common aspects of semiotics which have traditionally been used for newspapers. What I am emphasizing here is that although the Internet brought a new direction for

communicating environmental issues, some of the signs and language structure remained at the conventional stage. (Cooke, 2005)

At a first glance at Greenpeace/Turkey homepage, one can see the traditional web design called “Three Panel Layout” (Veen, 2001) which consists of a header, navigation bar and main content section which is similarly patterned after the newspaper layout design. (Cooke, 2005) This layout has been used to evoke the trustworthiness and seriousness of the content for the audience, they should feel the same as they would feel while reading a newspaper. Also, the clean-cut design, with a sufficient use of white space, creates clarity for the audience whose attention is directed to the main content of the page. Side bar is used for commercial purposes; except for the area used for social media channels that are used as promotional tools for the website, it hasn’t undergone any major changes.

Even though page-layout has extensive influence on how a user perceives the message from a website, there is no denial, on the matter that colors can induce different emotions for the users and that different usage of colors brings new meanings to a text, hence, changing the way it influences the audience. There has been debate regarding whether there are certain meanings assigned to each color and thus, web designers should be careful when using them in different contexts.

Study on the usage of colors on Greenpeace /Turkey website can be made on two levels. First, the meanings of each color separately for the visitors, second, the meaning of the combination of the colors. The first level consists of the three superior colors on Greenpeace/Turkey’s web design: green, blue, and white.

Green is the main color used for Greenpeace website. Green brings different meanings to the text depending on the context. Generally speaking, green is the color of nature, fertility and renewable energy. It has also been said to be the color of balance, self-respect, growth, and harmony, it also stimulates feelings of safety and security. On the other hand green is also stand for green politic which explains the series of thoughts and theories that study the way societies percept the world around them as Dobson notes “central to the theoretical canon of green politics is the belief that our social, political, and economic problems are substantially caused by our intellectual relationship with the world and practices stem from it” (2000, p.36)

Usage of blue always awakens the feeling of comfort to an extent yet it also stands for proficiency, knowledge and power. When it comes to Greenpeace it also reminds us of the sea and the need to protect it.

White is not a part of the color wheel, but it has its own influence on how a user interprets text. White signifies purity, clarification and neutrality. It also motivates the users to make strong and clear decisions and gives the sense of a fresh beginning. From another perspective, the usage of white as the color of the Greenpeace logo can be understood as Greenpeace’s neutrality toward political ideologies and as a stimulator for peace all over the globe. (Singh 2002)

The leading colors on Greenpeace/Turkey website are green and blue which are both known as ‘cool’ colors. Noack explains that “cool colors are best used on professional and clean-cut sites to achieve a cool corporate look. Cool colors stir up emotions of authority, establishment and trust. It wouldn’t be wise to use cool colors

on a site about an upbeat topic because users will get the wrong impression” (2010, para. 22)

Due to the fast growing success of online communication, there is an urgent need for every company to have its own web page. With this huge boom of web pages within the past decade, many design principles have been ignored or misused. One common example of this is with the usage of forms. While analyzing Greenpeace/Turkey website, I realized the site’s wide usage of rectangular forms for every function. Although rectangular shapes are beneficial for creating clean and organized designs, applying them frequently for every function damages the performance of the page in terms of its effectiveness. Al-Alaf, Khawatreh argues that

Rectangles are everywhere, frames, tables, images and browsers. Rectangles make your users feel boxed in, they divide the small amounts of real estate that you have into smaller pieces. They make everything on the page feel the same, predictable, boring, and standard. Sites that use too many rectangles feel generic and template. (2008, p.573)

In the next sections I moved my analysis to one of the major campaign of Greenpeace in Turkey which opposes installation of Nuclear power plant centers in Turkey. Nükleersiz Gelecek (Future without Nuclear) campaign existed for a long term in Turkey but had little influence on the actions of the government so far.

#### **4.1.3 Nükleersiz Gelecek (Future Without Nuclear)**

Greenpeace/Turkey is currently undertaking three different campaigns in Turkey and each of these campaigns has its own individual portal web pages which are focused on that specific campaign. I have concentrated my research on their Nükleersiz Gelecek (future without nuclear) campaign because of the most recent Fukushima nuclear accident and the influence of it on their campaign. In addition it is more

relevant to the topic of my research which analyzes the possible influence of using interactivity in user participation in the campaign.

The web page design has a similar structure to the homepage of Greenpeace / Turkey, but there are some subcategories on this website which need to be analyzed in depth since each of them carry messages that refer to different aspects of this campaign. I have separated these categories into two themes.

The first theme is “Türkiye Nükleer İstemiyor” (Turkey Does not Want Nuclear) that interrelates with The Chernobyl nuclear tragedy that happened in 1986 along with the recent nuclear accident in Fukushima, Japan. The second theme “Ben de Eylemdeyim” (I am also in strike/action) is concerned with the fifty eight activists who are on trial because of their opposition to government plans about nuclear power.

#### **4.1.3.1 A Case Study: Türkiye Nükleer İstemiyor (Turkey Does not Want Nuclear)**

This section of Nükleersiz Gelecek highlights incidents that have happened around the world due to nuclear power. There are two main tragedies which have grabbed the public attention in regard to this campaign. The first one is the Chernobyl disaster of 1986 and the other is the recent Fukushima tragedy. One can easily see the articulation of these two incidents in the design and language structure of the “Nükleersiz Gelecek” campaign.

Although there are different usages of multimedia, such as videos and photos for these web pages, I have concentrated my studies on the materials relevant to new media usage and interactivity.

While analyzing semiotics of “Türkiye Nuclear istemiyor” there are two materials which need to be analyzed separately, banner and webpage.

### Banner

According to Speronis model Internet ontology explains the information about internet and online discourses in this case the banner symbolizes the concept of the case which the webpage tries to focus on. In order to understand denotation and connotation of this banner there are four main elements which need to be analyze.1) Eye -glass 2) figure of the kid 3) mimic of the face and 4) usage of slogan [Illustration .2]



Illustration 2. <http://www.greenpeace.org/turkey/tr/campaigns/nukleersiz-gelecek/>

1) Eye Glass: The photo shows a child wearing green rimmed sunglasses with two yellow signs on the lens. On the right lens the yellow text reads “No” and on the right lens is the symbol for radiation. The reflection on the lens displays a group of people gathered together, caught up in the chaos, to protest against nuclear activity. The dark sunglasses can also represent the rejection of the awful truth.

2) Figure of the Child: The child who is displayed in this photo reminds us Eastern people. This can be interpreted as an element that induces the sad memory of the ongoing Fukushima plant incident.

3) Mimic of the face: The sadness is tangible, in the face of the person in the photo. The closed mouth resembles the look of disapproval and worry, at the same time it reminds the audience of the silent demonstration. There is a blank expression on the face which is a signifier of uncertainty with unknown consequences. In this case it may resemble a deep shock or mourning.

4) The slogan: “Türkiye Nükleer İstemiyor, Sen de sesini duyur.çernobil’in geçmişi, Türkiye’nin geleceği olmasın...” As Barthes argues there are two kinds of relationship between a written title and associated picture, those are anchorage and relay considering the color and the size of the slogan it is possible to say that the author used anchorage style. “Anchorage may be ideological and this may be its principal function...it remote controls him towards a meaning chosen in advance...the text has thus a repressive value” (Barthes, 1977, p.40) indeed the title does aid comprehension, sets some broad parameters and rules out some readings.

#### *Web-page*

The elements which need to be study for the “Türkiye Nükleer İstemiyor” web page and their denotation and connotation meanings consist of 1) the Grunge style of the page 2) Caution Tape.



Illustration 3. <http://nukleer.greenpeace.org/>

1)The grunge style of the page: The colors used on the “Türkiye Nükleer İstemiyor” web-page are brown, yellow, green and beige [Illustration.3]; these are the main colors for creating a grungy design style (Lennartz 2008). The style used to design this web page is called the grungy style. There are different concepts affiliated with the grungy style. Grunge as a word originated from a style of music which combines Punk, Rock and Metal. Considering this, it connotes violence, unconventionality and grime. Therefore grungy style is “perfect for websites that are by definition unconventional and quite radical” (2010, “Grunge Style”, para.3).

Some of the signs and the navigation bar are represented with graffiti style writing; you can see the participants’ photos at the bottom of the page and you can see the attendance numbers and the popularity of the topic by viewing the Twitter and Facebook counters. We can say that the whole design of the page encourages



individuality. However, by showing the popularity of the topic with displays of the attendee's pictures and the numbers of the related posts in social media, the site is giving the message that there is strength in numbers, and if we unite we can stop this dirty deal.

2) The caution tape: One of the elements used most in the design of this web page is caution tape which represents the danger and sensitivity of the matter. The presence of caution tape draws much attention both in the logo for the campaign on the top and around the box. On the right side of the main banner, there is a photo of the Fukushima nuclear power plant. The caution tape grabs the attention of the user by showing the website as a disaster zone. It brings the negative ideas of a possible disaster if an accident occurs after the construction of a nuclear power plant in Turkey

#### **4.1.3.2 A Case study: Semiotic analysis of “Ben de Eylemdeyim”**

“Ben De eylemdeyim” is another subcategory of “Nukleersiz Gelecek”, which concentrated its activity on the demonstration of fifty eight activist who gathered in front of the parliament building to criticize the actions of government regarding to plans for nuclear power..“Ben de Eylemdeyim” page also consists of the banner and the web page.

##### *Banner*

The elements which are important to be study in context of denotation and connotation are 1) Boxes 2) Stairs. Once again the usage of slogan and the linguistic choices offer notion of anchorage.



Illustration 4. <http://www.greenpeace.org/turkey/tr/campaigns/nukleersiz-gelecek/>

1) Boxes: As it shows in the photo each of the activists is holding a box, the boxes contain the signatures of 170,000 people. They are like voting boxes. It is like they brought the votes of the people who elected them as their representatives. TBMM represents democracy and democracy must serve the peoples wants and benefits. They are trying to become the voice of the suppressed people.

2) Stairs: The banner structure for this category is very much similar to “Türkiye Nükleer İstemiyor” banner [Illustration.4], except in this banner the photo displays several people sitting on stairs of the parliament, they are all wearing black T-shirts with “Türkiye Nükleer İstemiyor” printed on them and they are holding a box. At the top of the photo there is a big placard in yellow which writes “Say no to dirty nuclear deal”. The photo being shot from an upward angle can be interpreted in two ways. First, the possibility of going up, which represents moving toward greater goals and success, It could also be interpreted as the fact that a risk needs to be taken to unleash the real power that might be currently hidden.

In this context since the stairs are pointing to the sky, it can also be represented as the stairs to heaven which in this case connotes the hope for goodness. It can also mean as bringing up the unknown to the surface which in this case signifies the hidden political agenda behind nuclear debates. The Greenpeace members are sitting on the stairs in front of the TBMM building. This could be interpreted as the activists bringing the campaign to the government's doorstep and their plan to construct a nuclear power plant at the doorstep of people who live in Akkuyu.

### *Webpage*



Illustration 5. <http://nukleer.greenpeace.org/eylemdeyim/#/bende-eylemdeyim>

The elements which are fundamental for understanding the denotation and connotation of this webpage are 1) Virtual collage 2) Figure of a person

1) Figure of a person: The page consists of a wide usage of blank space (in dark grey color), a figure of a man wearing a black T-shirt and blue jeans. On the T-shirt the same slogan for the "Türkiye Nükleer İstemiyor" campaign is used with a big exclamation point [Illustration.5]. There is a yellow box, which has the words "Beni de Ekle" on it, by clicking on this box the user is navigated to another page which

has shades of grey in the background and three light grey boxes in the middle. From right to the left the signs guide the user to choose whether he would like to take a picture instantly by using web-cam or if he would like to upload a photo from his Facebook profile. The third box allows the user to upload a photo from his computer.

By clicking on the first box on the right, the page takes the user to the interface where the user can take a photo of him using his web-cam and placing the photo on the head of a default figure shown in the center of the page. Users have a variety of choices for manipulating the photo they have taken with their web-cam; they can choose the gender of the figure, adjust the size of the photo and adjust the brightness. The user can also go back to the previous screen and change the applied photograph. In addition, the instructions on how to adapt the user's photo to the figure is shown by an elliptic shape and an arrow headed plus which represents the shape of the face and the changing position.

2) Virtual collage: The most important part of this web page from a semiotical perspective is the activity which is famous for photo-montage. Although it is not exactly in the same pattern, it is still photo-montage material to an extent. Photo-montage has a series of definitions and meanings attached to it. First of all one of the key characteristics of photo-montage is intertextuality, intertextuality is the articulation of signs from a known context to a new and unfamiliar one. (Daniellson, 2011) Following Daniellson's point, there are different known elements which are used in this text that have been studied by many scholars and researchers; such as, self-identity, body figures and collage. The combination of these three elements creates a magnificent experience for the user which stimulates a feeling of rebellion and being part of a whole. As Biro quoted from Haraway "in short, we are cyborgs.

The cyborgs is our ontology; it gives us our politics. The cyborg is a condensed image of imagination and material reality, the two joined centers structuring any possibility of historical transformation” (2009, p .1).

#### **4.1.4 Discussion**

While analyzing the website I realized that many signs are used not because they fit the context but because they fit the design structure. For instance, the dominant colors of the Greenpeace web page are cool colors and as Noack argues, “cool colors have the influence of giving the sense of authority which is not a proper feeling for an environmental web page that aims to encourage users’ interaction”(2010, para. 22).

In addition, for a website designed to criticize and oppose governmental or social environmental struggles, cool colors do not have the characteristics which would grab the visitor’s attention. Another example is the loading sign designed for the page’s uploading process for the interactive photo-montage. The sign is a radiation symbol and this obviously does not fit the context of taking action against nuclear power.

### **4.2. Discourse Analysis**

#### **4.2.1 Greenpeace, Future without Nuclear, Turkey’s New Path**

For demonstrating the critical discourse analysis (CDA) of Greenpeace/Turkey’s “Nükleersiz Gelecek (NG)” webpage, I chose two articles from the Homepage of NG to make my analysis. The first article is related to the Fukushima Nuclear accident and the current situation of nuclear reactors in Japan. The second one is about the recent decision which the president of Japan made about their nuclear power projects.

The CDA of these articles can help us to understand the political stand point of Greenpeace-Turkey regarding the Nuclear power issue. In addition, this analysis also interrelates with the interview questions and helps in analyzing their results.

The texts are originally in the Turkish language therefore there is the limitation of translation in analyzing the text, but the aim of this study is to have a general understanding of Greenpeace-Turkey's political opinion about nuclear power in Turkey. Therefore, a fair translation of the original text would be enough for this evaluation. The text in the original language can be found in the appendix.

While the CDA is used for analyzing this text is mainly taken from the Hallidayan model of CDA, I also used theories of Fairclough who created a guideline for ones who choose to apply CDA analysis to a text, but as Wang argues, Fairclough's theories are one which one can be inspired from rather than copying them, therefore, this CDA analysis is a combination of Halliday and Fairclough theories plus my own evaluation of the text. Indeed, as McGregor's points out, there are no certain ways for analyzing a text critically and it works much better when a text is viewed from different critical discourse theoretical standpoints.

*Article 1; There Is another Melted Reactor n Fukushima*

The disaster in Japan's Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant is still not under control. Tokyo Electric Company (TEPCO) in its new announcement stated that the water level in reactor number 1 has dropped below 1 meter and the radioactive fuel is now open. This means that the meltdown in the reactor is still not under control. However, the company previously announced that the situation is under control in reactors 1, 2 and 3.

This also proves that the previously shared water, temperature, and pressure announcements by TEPCO were not true. Greenpeace Mediterranean Climate and Energy Campaign Representative Pinar Aksoğan stated that, “Now that the fuel rods are totally exposed and the meltdown continues, it is highly probable that there is more melting fuel under the protection reservoir of the reactor core”.

*Article 2; Japan Took the Step, Now It's Turkey's Turn*

The attempt to cancel the projects for new nuclear power plants by Japan must be an example for the Turkish government and for the rest of the world.

Yesterday in the press conference, the prime minister of Japan Naoto Kan made an announcement about canceling the plans regarding construction of new nuclear power plants in Japan and stated that Japan's long term energy plans are going to be revised. This statement can direct Japan's energy policies to a cleaner and renewable future.

Greenpeace Mediterranean Climate and Energy Campaigns Representative Pinar Aksoğan states, “With this decision, Japan which is one of the most technologically developed countries in nuclear energy showed the rest of the world how dangerous it is to make your people face the risks of nuclear energy. Instead of waiting for new accidents, the Turkish government also has to agree with the skepticism of nuclear energy. The nuclear disaster happening in Fukushima pushed many countries, starting with Japan, to revise their nuclear energy policies and make radical decisions. For the first time in Japan, the prime minister offered to end the activities in a nuclear power plant “Hamoka Plant” and this offer was applied.

#### **4.2.2 Textual Analysis**

As Bolin interpreted from Lemke (1995) Genre of a text is related to language, structure, grammar, vocabulary, and modality of text, in addition to this it also identifies itself through the usage of intertextuality. The most common variable for analyzing a text genre is through field, tenor, and mode (FTM) 2007, p.67). Also Bolin notes from Swales (2004), that there are two methods for making a CDA while using the Hallidayan model of language (FTM), one is to firstly analyze the FTM and then find its social, political, or cultural context and within this identify its genre. The other way is through firstly finding social, political, and cultural aspects and situations of the text linked to these parameters and then find its field, tenor, and mode. For this research, I used the second type, in order to first have a clear understanding about context and text and then analyze it through the glass of CDA. (2007, p.81)

Although critical analysis of these texts only focuses on the written language of the texts, it is important to note that placing a photo to a specific text also reflects the political concern of the writer which in this case is Greenpeace employees. [Illustration.6, 7]

Using big headlines for both articles shows how the writer emphasizes the topic. Since these articles are written by Greenpeace employees it is clear that the main goal of the writer is to inform the readers about the negative aspects of nuclear power.





Illustration 6 <http://www.greenpeace.org/turkey/tr/news/fukusimada-bir-reaktorde-daha-erime-120511/>

In the first article when the writer used a certain way of explaining the reactors problems in Fukushima, he used *There is another melt down in Fukushima*, by using a passive verb for this sentences he uses “nominalization” (Mc-Greogore, 2004) which is when a writer omits the agent or the responsible actors behind the incident, while the writer expresses on the incident more than the people responsible behind it. This matter can be also interrelated to the other article which in there the writer precisely expresses the agent (Japanese government) and note sits action.

The text is explained in a tone which conveys certainty as if the text cannot be objected to by any criticism and questions whether this matter is tangible through the usage of selective voices in both texts. Greenpeace Mediterranean Climate and Energy Campaign’s Representative Pinar Aksoğan shows the legitimacy of the text

and hence its reliability because of the tone of the sentences that she makes with her usage of words such as most, probably, and never.

Taking a direct quote from a Greenpeace spokesperson and while writing about TEPCO as third person conveys the message that Greenpeace is more objective than TEPCO and hence more legitimate .This manner can be also seen in other parts of the text when he emphasizes the matter that *TEPCO already said that first second and third reactors are under control*” while in the beginning of the article he expresses that the first reactor is out of control, therefore, TEPCO misguided the people by giving misinformation.

#### *Article 2*



Illustration 7 <http://www.greenpeace.org/turkey/tr/news/japonya-adim-atti-sira-turkiyede-120511/>

One of the things which were emphasized by the author of this text is as Fairclough mentions a “texturing of a relationship between the ‘global’ and national” (2004, p.5) and Japan in this article. Fairclough argues that this way of constructing time and

space is characteristically neo-liberal, in this text the author of the text creates a relationship between, the technologically advanced Japan, Turkey and rest of the world. Fairclogh (2004) divides these space to two different categories representing different time and space in this case it will be the Advance Japan space-time and Turkey and rest of the world space-time.

The first sentence can be seen as combining representations of Japan and Turkey space-time. *The attempt to cancel the projects for new nuclear power plants by Japan must be an example for the Turkish government and for the rest of the world.*

The rest of the article is mainly represents the Japan time and space. The space- time of Japan is created by certainty and on emphasizing on the technological advancement of Japan. Such as *Japan which is one of the most technologically developed countries in nuclear energy or canceling the plans regarding construction of new nuclear power plants in Japan*

On the other hand the Turkey and rest of the world space time is created by uncertainty and passiveness, such as *the Turkish government also has to agree with the skepticism of nuclear energy or Instead of waiting for new accidents, the Turkish government...*

Another noticeable style which was used by the writer is the usage of presupposed expressions such as, *the attempt to cancel the projects of new nuclear power plants by the Japanese government must be an example for the Turkish government and to the rest of the world.* The writer's expression of this point is written in a way which leaves the statement unquestionable to the readers.

In this text, similar to the former one, by using the statement of Greenpeace Mediterranean Climate and Energy Campaign Representative directly, who is a specialist on this subject, the writer emphasized the legitimacy of the article.

The author also used rhetorical communication elements to express Japan's point of view versus the rest of the world. For example, by citing Greenpeace's spokesperson, the writer states that Japan showed the rest of the world how dangerous it is to let your people face the risks of nuclear energy. The writer thus expresses the fact that the rest of the world hasn't been taking the necessary precautions to avoid possible nuclear disasters.

In order to organize my CDA, I based my analysis on this question, on what the *field*, *tenor*, and *mode* of the news are about the nuclear accident and Japan's nuclear debate which is published on the Greenpeace website and, considering these variables, what is the register (genre) and the ideology of these texts. Quotations from each article are shown in an Italic font.

#### **4.2.3 Field**

As I mentioned in the methodology chapter, the field of a text explains the topic of the text but also evaluates the text in its context and searches for how the text will be understood when it is juxtaposed to a specific combination of time and space.

The experiential meaning of this text is about nuclear debates, nuclear energy expertise, political and social relations associated with nuclear energy, and environmental issues affiliated with nuclear energy. Also the creation of separate time and spaces such as in the second article Japan space-time and Turkish space-time. By the means of experiential meaning, the first and the second articles consist

of nuclear debate, nuclear energy expertise, and environmental issues that are affiliated with nuclear energy. On the other hand, the ideational meanings of the articles are assumptions about nuclear energy, and the future of it, the substitution of it with renewable and clean energy, and the possibility of nuclear disasters.

#### **4.2.4 Tenor**

In order to understand the Tenor of a text it is first necessary to understand who are involved in the text and what the relation is between them, which consist of the authors, the audiences, and the interrelation between them.

As for these articles there is no personal author of these articles; the articles are the news coverage of Greenpeace written by authors of Greenpeace Mediterranean. The audience consists of everyone, including website visitors, Greenpeace members, and environmental activists. Both articles use imperative style because they both demonstrate certainty in their statements by talking about Japan's actions and the dos and do-not's that other countries should follow. Both texts show a high level of social distance by using the titles before the participant's name in the text like Pinar and Naoto Kan. Texts are written in the third person and there is less usage of pronouns and the author stays anonymous. The author is the Greenpeace organization which has great knowledge and authority about these matters.

As discussed before, the attitude of the author toward the text is different for each article, in one of the texts, the author used nominalization by using passive tense, while on the other text the author emphasizes the subject and promotes the doer by using active tense.

#### **4.2.5 Mode**

One way to understand the mode of a text is to evaluate the text in terms of how it tries to build a relationship with its readers considering the method the author chooses to communicate with its readers such as spoken language or written language (Halliday, 1976). Since these articles are published in the Greenpeace website, there is a low degree of coincidence in both themes, which means they were both controlled and edited by several people in the Greenpeace organization, and approved by them and then published on the website. The information given in each article is more or less interrelated with each other. For example, the reason the first article doesn't criticize Japan but TEPCO can be because the other article praises the Japanese government.

#### **4.2.6 Intertextuality, Genre and Ideology**

In the first article the author intertexts the action of TEPCO to the matter of untrustworthiness and unreliability, which has personal hidden agendas. This matter is also interrelated with the fact that TEPCO (Tokyo Electric Power Co) is a privately held company and is currently in crisis due to the damage its reactors caused, after the nuclear accident, to the environment and the leaking of radiation into the natural resources of Fukushima and Japan (2011). The genre of this article, according to the evaluation of field, tenor, and mode is expository and it is used when the author wants to explain something.

Although there is a big agenda intertexted with the text considering TEPCO's situation, the author did not mention the slightest thing about this matter which shows the formality and neutrality of the text in support of what was found through the analysis of field, tenor, and mode of this article. The ideological aspect of this text can be explained as the stance of Greenpeace as an organization concerned about

the environmental issues rather than political debates. In the second article, intertextuality of the text can be understood by the social, political, and cultural traces from other discourses interrelated with the text. The social traces in this article can be mentioned as discourses; such as developing countries and developed countries and technological advancements. In addition, the text used some elements which interrelates with avant-garde actions and puts Japan as the leader for a new movement. By considering the information gathered through the analysis of the field, tenor and mode of this article, it is identifiable that the genre of this article is hortatory, which stands for the situation that the author promotes someone or something. (Larsson, 1984)

Considering these factors it is easy to see the ideological standpoint of the author of this text, the Greenpeace Turkey organization, which is promoting developed countries' political decisions placing Turkey in a backward position that it should follow once again in the path of the more modern countries in a blindfold way is not the best solution.

### **4.3 Interviews: Evaluation of Greenpeace Website Structure and Interactivity**

To analyze the results of the interviews, firstly I translated the answers, organized them according to the questions of the research, compared the results of the interviews with each other and then categorized them into three parts which are; theoretical standpoints of environmentalists and contemporary environmentalism in Turkey, the issues of the Greenpeace webpage regarding interactivity and new media and finally, the subject of the nuclear power plants of Turkey and Greenpeace's oppositional campaign on this matter.

#### **4.3.1 The case of Western Environmentalism in Global and Local context**

According to all of the interviewees, Greenpeace's international status is strength for the organization and it gives the members a feeling of trust. Emre says that "Internationality does affect my perception, it gives people a feeling of security"; also Mustafa sees the internationality feature as support and a strong background of the organization. He states that "Internationality affects me, because I think it is more influential ", in addition, some of the interviewees relate the internationality to the matter of the high level of experience of the organization. Canan refers to this issue as "the Internationality of Greenpeace is influential because of the experience behind it, how other Greenpeace locations handle their issues can be a guide for us."

Interviewees had different responses to the question regarding the issue of Western environmentalism and its influence on the environmentalism of Greenpeace/Turkey. Yet, the majority found western environmentalism more mature and they perceive reflection of it on Turkey's environmental issues a positive fact which could improve the situation for Turkey's environmental problems. For example, Esra says that "the West is always more aware of everything, because of the higher education level they have, because of the problems we face in our life we are less aware (of what is going on about our environment)." Additionally, some of the interviewees relate this issue with the core theoretical standpoint of Greenpeace. Işıl says that, "I think western environmentalism is influential on the campaign because since Greenpeace started operating in Turkey, numbers of environmentalists are increasing day by day. It also influences the success of our demonstrations. The core philosophy of our demonstration is to manage the problems in peace and this philosophy creates an environment in which there would be no need for police to interfere and this philosophy is coming from the west".



By contrast, some other participants did not think that western environmentalism had an effect on Greenpeace's campaigns in Turkey. Bahar explains this fact from an organizational point of view when she notifies that most of the decisions of Greenpeace/Turkey have been made by Turkish people not by the headquarters of Greenpeace. Yet, she also says that "sometimes they mention that we should concentrate more on the wind power plants in Turkey". Therefore, considering Bahar's argument the material that exists on the sites has passed through different stages of corrections and modification.

While the majority of the interviewees had an optimistic perspective about the influence of western environmentalism in Turkey, some of the interviewees had rather a pessimistic one. As Pinar argues "I don't think western environmentalism can understand environmental problems here, because they neither see nor live the problems in Turkey and cultural differences change perceptions. Greenpeace does not choose the right way to handle the issues in Turkey". Some participants believe that environmental issues have regional and cultural differences which cannot be handled from a global perspective.

From another point of view, not all the interviewees consider Greenpeace as a western organization. Rather they think it's a global one. They see Greenpeace's way of dealing with environmental issues globally.

As I discussed earlier in chapter two, the contemporary definition of what we know as environmentalism now is formed after the urbanization and modern movement of the west. Therefore, many values which are promoted as environmental values also rose from that culture. In order to have a better understanding of how western

environmentalism effects Greenpeace's environmental communication with its followers, it is sufficient to identify their online communication between young Turkish environmental activists and the Greenpeace/Turkey website.

#### **4.3.2 The Case of Online Communication and Elements in Web Design**

Interviewees mainly found social media to be one of the key methods for their communication about environmental problems. But generally, most of the interviewees apart from the Greenpeace employees didn't find Greenpeace very active in social media. They get their news by direct e-mail, and then check the website. Hakan mentions that, even though he used to be a follower of the Greenpeace Twitter account, he quit following them because they kept on sending useless tweets. Yet, the employees of Greenpeace have a different perspective on this matter. Canan explains that, "Greenpeace is very active regarding the matter of social media such as Vimeo, Twitter, Foursquare, and Youtube". In this regard interviewees who are members of Greenpeace mention that, they sometimes share the news directly from the webpage with their own opinions about it on Facebook. This matter can be analyzed from the potential and the level of interactivity that Greenpeace website creates for the users to get involved in constructing the narrative of the site. Esra mentions on this matter as "(I have) no influence on the page and I just can share the news with my own comments on Facebook". In general as much as the interviewees found social media a vital element for communicating environmental issues, most of the communication of the Greenpeace website is happening by direct e-mails.

This matter indeed raises the question regarding the narrative structure of the Greenpeace website. In order to answer this question the findings were gathered through a combination of semiotic analysis, critical discourse analysis, and

interviews. While generally the interviewees consider the website's most important news as the one which is shown as the heading of the page, Mert explains that "The headline of the webpage is the campaign which is currently more active in Turkey". By contrast some other interviewees believed that the importance of the news should be decided by the users rather than the website. They mention that sometimes they cannot find the news which is important for them because of the structure of the webpage. Pinar argues that "Sometimes I'm getting lost, whether in the "Future without Nuclear" campaign or any other campaign, I can't find what I am looking for". From the same point of view Ergin says that, "Yes (the news) is ordered according to its importance, but sometimes I can't find the links which are important to me". I asked the interviewees about their opinion concerning the quality of the news coverage on the Greenpeace website, precisely about the Akkuyu nuclear center, in order to understand the influence of the narrative structure of the website on user's reaction to the materials on the page. Some of the interviewees were thinking that the news is not strong and influential enough. Mert states that "I don't find the "Future without nuclear" campaign influential. This is also the same for many other Greenpeace campaigns, only "how long is yours" is good". From the same perspective another interviewee Ergin emphasizes that "I don't think the Akkuyu news coverage is influential enough, it could be more effective, personally I think they really don't pay enough attention to this matter". In addition, another interviewee believes that the news on the Greenpeace website is mainly biased. Pinar explains that "to be honest, I had some previous information about nuclear energy. But, if we consider a visitor who doesn't know anything about nuclear energy then Greenpeace only talks about the negative sides of nuclear energy and doesn't mention anything about why the government has plans for nuclear energy. Because it

is just about the negative side, one cannot have a clear understanding of the subject. Greenpeace should talk about what nuclear energy is, what are the advantages and disadvantages of it and why the government wants to use it and then by knowing the fact that the disadvantages are more than the advantages, then prefers not to use it.”

What Pınar is discussing in her statement can be also analyzed from the possibility of interactivity that the webpage provides for its users. The information about nuclear energy can be also provided by the user’s discussion and communication on the website. Which brings us to the matter of to what extent the users are involved in the narrative structure of the website?

I asked the interviewees about their evaluation of the site’s interactivity. The responses of the interviewees mainly characterize the users of the site as passive users who mainly find the material of the website educational rather than a subject of improvement and reconceptualization. When I asked the interviewees what their activity after reading the news from the Greenpeace website is, the majority of them answered that they only use the material for their own knowledge improvement. Mert says that “I learn from them, instead of getting news from the TV or newspapers which are mostly biased, I like to get news from Greenpeace which is less biased”. Their understanding of being biased or not biased is based on their point of view.

In another question about the evaluation of the effect of the users in the structure of the web page, some interviewees say that “Greenpeace doesn’t let the users be active. Even though the users are the ones supporting them, they don’t motivate them enough”. Supporting his point of view about the interactivity of the site Ergin says that “I can’t be influential on the page, even sometimes when I support a campaign I

can't find where my support is shown. They can make the site more detailed and effectual". Apart from the employees of Greenpeace most of the interviewees suggested that the site could be less complex and more interactive for the users. Mustafa explains on this matter that "the website can be simpler; communicating with the site is not that easy". Emre says that "Maybe for interacting with the site more, they could create the possibility for the visitors to leave comments (under the campaign)". Pinar explains that, "I learned that I can be influential on the content of the site but I can't find out how. I would like it if they make the website clearer so I could interact with the website".

While members of Greenpeace find the users of the website passive, Greenpeace employees have an opposite point of view about this matter. Canan says that "I like the Greenpeace website, it was newly updated, and you can comment and share the news". While employees of Greenpeace believe that the possibility of commenting for the users is an interactive feature of the site, the users are not quite aware of such a feature. When I asked the users whether they would prefer to leave comments on the page, most of the responses were positive but some were concerned about the material that commenters might put on the web. Mert says that "I wouldn't want commenting on the page because many of us have a harsh way of explaining ourselves. But it is not the way Greenpeace works". Yet, on the same subject Ergin mentions that "sometimes I like to write comments for the news on the Greenpeace website, but I can't find the place for it".

This issue can also be associated with the design structure of the website and how it influences the users. In order to understand the opinion of the users about the design structure of the website and the influence of it on their interaction with the site, I

asked the interviewees how they feel about the design of the site in terms of the page layout. Once again the majority of the users found the page complex, unattractive and misleading. Emre says that “The design can be more effective, it can be more detailed, user friendly, and less confusing”. From the same point of view Mert says that “I found the design difficult and mixed up, it is hard to find what you are looking for”. Some other interviewees found the site’s design not functional. Ergin states that “the page could be nicer, and more direct, I don’t find the website quite that successful”. From the same perspective Elif explains that “Even though right now the professional environmental activist prefers the social media style because it is easy to use and fast, as Turkish people we like flashy and stylish designs”. Not surprisingly, employees of Greenpeace had a different opinion about the design of the page. Gamze explains that “The main page is the standard page used all over the world, the colors are identical and it is user friendly. The campaign’s page has a different style of design; they are all totally designed to explain the problem and explain the solutions with photos and info graphs”. Bahar says that “It is not hard to use the website but it can be also because I use it so often”. While these parts of the interview results discuss the web based and theoretical understanding of interviewees about the Greenpeace organization, the next part mainly focuses on the nuclear power plants in Turkey and the influence of the recent disaster in Fukushima, Japan and the Future without Nuclear campaign of Greenpeace/Turkey.

#### **4.3.3 Issue of Nuclear Power Planting in Akkuyu**

All of the users were affected by the negative side of nuclear power plants and the wrongness of constructing them in Akkuyu. Esra says that,

Fukushima took our attention more to the danger of nuclear energy and put our focus on what is happening in Turkey. We might have had this criticism in our subconscious, but with the realization of what happened in Japan, now

we are totally against it and even though they say there is no influence on Turkey because of what happened in Japan I still believe that it did and the same thing can easily happen here too.

For some other interviewees it also affects their political point of view. Gamze states that “When I vote (at the coming election) I am going to consider the nuclear issue and Future without Nuclear campaign and then vote”. Emre states that “Of course Fukushima influenced me. I was already against nuclear energy and I was thinking that the Fukushima accident would be a lesson for us, but I can see now that it wasn’t”. Though all of the interviewees found the Fukushima accident influential, in their opposition against nuclear power plants in Turkey, the majority of the interviewees didn’t find the campaign successful enough, and they found the news coverage about this matter weak.

Ergin says that “I don’t think the Akkuyu news coverage is influential enough, it could be more effective. Personally, I don’t think they really give enough attention to this matter”. Other interviewees say that they do not find the campaign successful enough so they don’t think of participating in it. Pinar says about this matter “I’m not thinking of opposing nuclear power plants because of Greenpeace’s campaign, because I think it is biased. Ergin expresses that “I’d like to support them but as I said before, I don’t think they give the needed importance to this matter”.

In order to study the influence of cultural symbols which were used or not used in the design of the website, on the user’s behavior toward the site, I asked the interviewees whether they were aware of the fact that the site is operating for three regions; Turkey, Israel and Lebanon under the name of Greenpeace Mediterranean. Also, I asked them what they think about the matter that the base design of the site is the

same for all these three regions, by considering cultural influences on the design of a website. Bahar explains that “Language is the important element for a global website operating in different regions, other than that, because it is international, the same concept is important”. Following Bahar, Pinar argues that “I think it is important that the website design be the same everywhere” yet other interviewees believed that usage of cultural symbols can stimulate users interaction with the site and help them to understand the site better, also, it can attract them more because the symbols will be more familiar to them. Precisely on the campaigns which are more related to the local problems of Turkey such as the “Future without Nuclear” campaign. Interviewees had different points of views about this.

#### **4.3.4 Discussion**

The comparison of the results of the interviews can be discussed in two different categories, which I argue about separately, based on the theories that were mentioned in the literature review chapter and questions of the interview. The first category is about the fundamental theories which shape the contemporary environmentalism issues in Turkey and compares the theoretical standpoints of young environmentalists in Turkey with the former studies of scholars about environmental communication. Second, the category discusses the importance of a deep knowledge about the cultural, social, and political aspects of the environmental issues that Turkey has been facing recently.

##### **4.3.4.1 Contemporary Environmentalism in Turkey in Traditional Western Values**

This part of the analysis is related to the questions of the interview which was related to the experience, ontology and structure that the Greenpeace/Turkey website provides for its users. Analysis of the result regarding these matters guided me to



understand that core epistemological issues exist in the discourses of online environmental communication

It is important to mention that environmentalism which is discussed here is one of the mainstream environmental issues which is delivered by the Greenpeace organization. What is clearly noticeable between the result of the interviews regarding the subject of internationality and western philosophy's influence on the environmentalism in Turkey is the matter of exaggerated trust and appreciation that young environmentalist Turks have for an foreign culture. Voulvouli criticizes the organization's methods because of the narrow and monopolistic perspective which only takes the global, political, scientific research as the leading method for solving the local environmental issues of Turkey (2010).

What is important to understand in Voulvouli's discussion is the topic that how Greenpeace handles the environmental issues in Turkey can't be the best fitted solution for all the local problems in Turkey, even though this globalization characteristic of Greenpeace is clearly displayed from the organization's side by the means of graphic design, such as the same standard website for all of the world or synchronized, globalized campaigns for environmental issues such as the Fukushima accident. The internationality of the company is seen as the strongest feature of the organization. At first glance this subject might not seem that important compared to the more tangible issues that environmentalists are going through in Turkey, whether politically or socially, but a deeper look at the structure of environmental communication in Turkey can reveal the weak point of Greenpeace in creating a deep interaction between the organization and the members and also the members by themselves. In order to understand this matter more clearly it is useful to first discuss

the main dominant structure which shapes the global and contemporary field of environmentalism, therefore the same structure is also applied in Turkey by the majority of the organizations including Greenpeace. Although some of the interviewees believe that Greenpeace is a global company rather than a western one, there is no denying the fact that the philosophy of Greenpeace influenced from western environmentalism. Voulvouli says in this regard what is typically known as environmentalism in Greenpeace /Turkey or generally in Turkey is defined by the values of western thoughts. (2010) However this influence is not always problematic but there some issues which rose when it is applied dominantly.

The problems which are created because of this structure can be explained in two different areas. First is the problem of the environmental communication within the system of language and social structure. Second is the unfamiliarity of global environmental values with domestic environmental issues of Turkey from political, cultural and social perspectives.

The former area can be explained through the relation of language, words and the meaning of them in creating hierarchies and structure of the things around us, yet this progress is not quite tangible enough for us. There is a variety of parameters within the everyday culture which shape our perception about nature and how we communicate about it. But generally speaking these processes are invisible to us but it controls our vision about the nature surrounding us (Littlejohn, 2009)

A good example for this matter is Little John's discussion about the word environment and the social structure that is fabricated with its definition in environmental communication. As Foss states "the word environment is a symbol we

dominantly use in western culture to connote the natural world and it connotes a material nature that surrounds us and it is separate from us, the symbol or metaphor of environment is not only shaped by the materials and symbolic western historical and contemporary ideas of an action toward nature” (2009, p.346) .Not surprisingly, the Turkish word “Çevre” as the direct translation of the word environment which stands for both the natural discourses and material world, it carries the same weight.

However, these values exist within the system of environmental communication in western thoughts and only recently have scholars started to study the social construction and influence of them within environmental communication .Young environmentalists of Turkey and Greenpeace seem to ignore these issues and keep the traditional thought of promoting the west as the guide for Turkey and the future goal or next step that Turkey should take, ignoring the fact that at the very beginning of the environmental issues in Turkey, lays the blind imitation of urbanization progress that has taken Turkey under the influence of western thought.

What has been discussed above is also mentioned in the critical discourse analysis of one of the articles which was taken from the Greenpeace website and was evaluated based on CDA’s criteria in the previous sections. The political standpoint of Greenpeace, generally positions the west as the guide. As it was mentioned in the critical discourse analysis of the article about Japan’s recent action toward nuclear energy, the author states Japan as the leader and Turkey as the follower, rather than criticizing Turkey’s actions toward nuclear energy and offer a new solution which would be more locally possible for Turkey, it motivates it to blindly imitate Japan’s action.

#### **4.3.4.2 Contemporary Environmentalism and Domestic Culture**

The second category deals with the significance of cultural values and conventions which could be a better alternative for some of the environmental issues that Turkey faces. This section connects the results of the interviews to the questions concerning website design and the narrative structure of it. In addition, it evaluates the findings related to the possibility of participation of users in modification of the narrative structure of the website with the matter of interactivity and its potential in enhancing the user's activity while surfing the website. The result conducts an understanding about the political and social strategies of the Greenpeace organization to find solutions for environmental problems in Turkey especially about the issue of nuclear energy and its influence on the future of Turkey.

As it was mentioned by one of the interviewees, the western method for handling the issues is not always the best way, because some environmental issues are so related to the domestic social, political and cultural structure within Turkey. Voulvouli points to the matter that, social factors have great influence on how the ecological problems are shaped. In another sense social relationships plays a fundamental rule on how society and social problems are constructed.(2009) Therefore, if the environmental issues are related with the social and societal relations, the method that can be applied as a solution to this problem only flourishes within that specific society which lives with that environmental issue. In order to understand the way that the elements mentioned above are communicated with the members and users of the Greenpeace website, it is sufficient to study the result of the interviews by means of communication from new media studies perspective.

The positive influence of interactive communication on the environmental communication studies is one of the recent subjects for researchers within both fields, yet, this matter has been studied regarding the pedagogical perspective rather than the actual contemporary communication between environmental organizations and environmental activists. The result of the interviews shows that the existing online communication between Greenpeace/Turkey and its users doesn't appear to be as successful as it was meant to be. On many of the web pages of the site, interactivity has been used quite influentially, but it seems that the design of the website creates unnecessary complexity for the users and sometimes misleads them. The interactivity that the site provides for the users doesn't carry the potential possibility that interactive communication can create for its users, the kind of communication that Bagrit and Macluhan explain; as providing the chance for the users to switch from being a passive audience to active users, and influence the content and structure of the webpage (2002, p.120). Hartley's interpretation of Bagrit and Macluhan's works suggest that "Interactivity is an antidote to the factories of the industrial revolution in which people's work had to be adopted to accommodate the machines. This imagery and language have reappeared in accounts of digital technology, by being able to direct, communicate, and create through new interactive technologies we are becoming re-humanized (2002, p.120)

While Hartley theoretically creates an idealistic perspective for the users of interactive communication, on the practical side interactive elements are not quite functionally used in the majority of the websites. According to the interviewees, the Greenpeace website does not provide enough opportunities for its users and creates no space for the users to create, direct, and reshape the constructed narrative which already existed on the website and even in a more traditional media such as print or

broadcasting. What is lacking in the design structure of the Greenpeace/Turkey website is what Schiver points out as ignoring the consequences of design element that shapes the way users experience the website (1999, p.167)

Originally, an interactive experience has four stages which consist of two elements; absorption and immersion. As Mclellan (2000, p176) explains, these elements have a direct relation with active or passive users which means that the combination of each element creates a different experience for the user. At the first stage a passive participant who is just absorbing the information given majorly uses the online communication for entertainment while an active one educates herself from it. On the other hand, at the immersion stage the passive users experiences aesthetic characteristics of the website while active users live through a sense of responsibility to influence and improve the content on the page (Mclellan, 2000) from the evaluation of the interviewees answers regarding their integration with the site and also the activity that they perform with the information they gain through surfing the Greenpeace website, it is most possible that they experience the educational stage of interactivity. However, as Hartley explains, it can do much more than only educate the users. A good example of this subject is the oppositional campaign of Greenpeace against nuclear power plants in Turkey.

“Nukleersiz Gelecek” (future without nuclear) originally is one of the most enduring campaigns of Greenpeace/Turkey but unfortunately unlike it’s long existence in Turkey, the campaign couldn’t shake, postpone, or have any effect whatsoever on the government’s plans regarding the nuclear power plant in Akkuyu. As Emre says in his interview, “even the tragedy of Fukushima didn’t change the government’s plan.” According to the majority of the interviewees this campaign is not really successful

yet it is one of the most important environmental issues that Turkey faces these days. But what the reason is behind this failure is the question mentioned by Pınar. As she mentions in her interview, the information that she sees on the Greenpeace/Turkey website is rather biased and based on only negative views of nuclear energy. The lack of information about why Turkey needs nuclear energy can be one of the reasons behind the weakness of this campaign both on the traditional media and the new media usage of the Greenpeace organization. As Demirbaş argues, the building of a nuclear plant in Akkuyu is the result of one of the big issues that Turkey faces because of the lack of electricity. He explains that during the past years, demand for electricity has been of great concern in Turkey. Due to this, the government had to import electricity from Georgia, Bulgaria and Iran yet the scarcity of electricity is still tangible, therefore, the government arranged conditions to produce nuclear energy. (2009). Another reason is because even if the users or audience have information about the reasons behind the building of nuclear power plants in Turkey, they don't have enough knowledge about the alternative resources which can be substituted in place of nuclear energy. Likewise one of the employees of Greenpeace mentions that global Greenpeace sometimes recommend Greenpeace/Turkey to spread its campaign about wind power which currently is the one of the good substitutions for nuclear power plants aimed at creating electric power.

It is important to mention that the beneficial information about the problems of nuclear power plant construction could be provided by Greenpeace but it can also be provided by the users. The potential power of discussion and sharing in online communication between the organization and the users and also between the users themselves can create the antidote to the monopolistic method which is represented

by the Greenpeace organization in Turkey, whether consciously or unconsciously, for dealing with environmental issues.

Finally, from the results of interview it is noticeable that the communication method currently in use between the Greenpeace website and its members lacks a mutual understanding either from a web-based ontology or political standpoint. On the other hand, considering the importance of a solid interactive communication method which enables a high potential of cyber activism it's worth it to rethink the existing relationship and search for solutions which would improve the case.



## **Chapter5**

### **CONCLUSION**

In the last few decades one of the main sources of communication has been the Internet. It is fair to say that the amount of information spreading through the usage of the Internet is incomparable with the conventional sources of media such as TV or newspapers. However, how this information is communicated and what is the influence of the usage of the Internet in communicating this information is the question of much academic research. While information technology researchers try to study the interaction and web interface source codes for technological advances, scholars from sociological backgrounds research the impact of the Internet and its interaction with society from cultural, social, and political points of views.

One of the fields on which the Internet has had a strong theoretical affect is environmentalism. Although environmentalism existed long before the invention of the Internet, web-based communication brought a new perspective to environmentalism.

While theoretically the potential of interactive media opened new windows of opportunity for environmentalists to shake the grounds of the dominant ideology and create more space for alternative resources of information, practically it made the communication and delivery of mainstream messages easier and faster.

In order to understand how this failure took place it is necessary to take some steps back and discuss the fundamental incidents which influenced the contemporary definition of environmentalism in online communication. As environmentalism started to grow more important everyday due to the environmental issues caused by urbanization and its fast paced and destructive usage of natural resources; the matter of how society should integrate with environmentalism also became a more sensitive question. Therefore, an official environmentalism ideology was formed, which would deal with the social aspect of the field. But it was in 1970, after the celebration of Earth Day that the real issue of environmental sociology was raised.

Discovery of the truth about official environmentalism that was funded by some of the gigantic corporations, who were the core of many environmental issues and white wash of U.S media to cover this act, disappointed many activists and shaped what is now known as independent environmentalism.

Although scholars such as Durkheim, Weber and Marx, many years earlier developed theories about the relation of humans and nature, it was after the formation of an independent source that theories such as Murphy and Fairclough were inspired by Weber and Durkheim's studies and formed eco-Marxism and the new ecological paradigm (NEP).

Eco-Marxism and NEP both see the core of environmental issues within the current system of capitalism and eco-Marxism questions the economical domination of western and capitalist systems and seeks the solution to the environmental issues outside of the capitalist context. On the other hand NEP researches the modernization

discourses within this system and believes that the problem and the solution to the environmental issues exist within the same system (Konak, 2010).

The process of modernization has influenced many developing countries that went through the procedure of westernization. One of the countries which are discussed in this regard is Turkey. As Özdemir argues, “the geographical position of Turkey which connects the east to the west, its rich historical and cultural background, the current environmental issues that it goes through, makes Turkey an interesting case to study.”

There are several organizations which are currently working on environmental issues in Turkey. To name some of the most influential ones, one can name; TEMA (Turkish foundation for Combating Soil Erosion), WWF (World Wild Found), and Greenpeace. There are a variety of fields which can research the environmental issues in Turkey. This research focuses on the environmental communication which is a field that crosscuts grounds of environmental sociology and communication and media studies. Considering the importance of interactive media within the contemporary discourses of communication, this research attempts to investigate the potential influence of interactive media on environmental movements in Turkey by focusing on the Greenpeace website and their campaign which opposes nuclear power plants in Turkey.

There are three elements which need to be considered while analyzing a website. The linguistic structure used in the site to communicate with the users, the design structure of the site, and the level of interactivity usage on the site. For conducting information regarding these elements, I used a multimodal approach in order to

analyze the website from different perspectives and gathered in-depth information about how the Greenpeace website is communicating with its users.

Semiotic analysis, critical discourse analysis, and interviews were applied to gather the information for this research. The data that was collected from each of these approaches interchangeably helped to understand and evaluate the findings gathered from the other ones.

The Greenpeace/Turkey web design has a conventional structure and it consists of a header, main content, sidebar, and footer. This structure is very similar to the layout of a newspaper; therefore, the website design stimulates the experience of reading a newspaper for the users and attaches professionalism and formality to itself. Usage of colors and forms in the design of the site positions the organization at higher level and a position of authority to the users. The “Nükleersiz Gelecek” webpage which is designed for Greenpeace’s oppositional campaign against nuclear power plants in Turkey used design principles without considering how the user will experience them. On the other hand, the usage of colors and photographs applied cautiously which motivate the users to take action and become a part of a whole, a whole which are all against nuclear power plants in Turkey and are powerful and capable of achieving a big goal.

While the design structure of the WebPages tries to create an atmosphere for the users to feel connected and involved with the Greenpeace website, the language which is used to explain news about nuclear activities are distanced from the users. It positions the users as passive subjects who only should accept the statement of the author. By CDA of two articles related to the recent nuclear accident in Fukushima,

from Greenpeace/Turkey webpage, it is clear that not only Greenpeace tries to keep the news structure as formal as possible but also promotes western values by motivating Turkey to imitate the actions of a developed country such as Japan. On the other hand, this matter was also visible in the findings gathered through the interview. Many of the attendees believed in western values and western environmentalism as a role guide for Turkey. There is a low level of trust on Turkish culture and Turkish values among the interviewees.

Yet the interviewees had different opinions than each other regarding the activity of the campaigns, the design structure of the web site, its functionality and then the level of interactivity which would enable the users to share and discuss more on the web and transform from a passive audience to active users.

While employees of Greenpeace explain the site as a user friendly interfaced webpage, the users experience complexity and getting lost when they surf Greenpeace/Turkey website. This matter is due to the lack of relationship between the user and the organization. If there would be more chances for the users to become involved with the structure and design of the page, the website would become more understandable for the users. For example, if the order of the campaigns were chosen by the users of the site, it would affect both the organizations success and the users' satisfaction.

Findings of the research regarding the `Future without Nuclear campaign displays that, while this campaign has been running for quite a long time in Turkey, unfortunately it has not been as influential as it should. Indeed by now the "Future without Nuclear" campaign did not change, postpone, or have any influence on the

construction of nuclear energy plants. One of the reasons could be explained as the lack of solid information that the campaign webpage provides for its users.

Results of the research show that users of the Greenpeace/Turkey website ask for an educational part which would discuss nuclear power disadvantages and a possible eco-friendly substitution for it.

This need can be fulfilled by the means of interactive media. Possibility of sharing can create a space for the users to share their knowledge and also learn from it. Therefore a sufficient further research would be studying the interactivity and its potential for educating possibilities within the current system of web design. For instance, how the usage of interactive media would improve pedagogical methods to teach about wind energy as an eco-friendly substitute for nuclear energy, aimed for boosting electricity production.

In conclusion, this research argues that, while there is a variety of positive influences of the Internet and online communication on environmentalism, because it is a cheaper, faster, and easier source of communication, the real potential of it exists in the aspect of sharing and bringing new alternatives to the conventional sources of media, challenging the hegemony and the monopolistic ideology, and transforming it to a higher level of interaction day by day. Considering the idealistic theory made above, and the findings of this research, it is important to rethink that what if interactive media did not strengthen environmentalism, but rather placed

many

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## **APPENDICES**

## **Appendix A: Interview Questions**

- 1 - How old are you?
- 2- What's your Marital status?
- 3- Are you a member of any Environmental organizations national or international?
- 4- Does the fact that Greenpeace as an international Organization influence your Participation in their campaigns?
- 5- How often do you visit Greenpeace Webpage?
- 6- Under what circumstances you feel the necessity to visit the Greenpeace website?
- 7- Do you follow Greenpeace Webpage on Face book, Twitter, or other social networks?
- 8- Do you news feed the information of Greenpeace webpage on your face book, twitter or any other social networks?
- 9- What do you think about the design structure of the website of Greenpeace /turkey in terms of page layout?
- 11- Does the Design Structure and positions of the hyperlinks in the Greenpeace webpage influence the importance order of them for you?
- 10- What do you think about the news coverage and information provided in the website of Green peace turkey about Nuclear planting in Akkuyu?
- 12-What do you do with the information you get from the web site? How do you use it or do you use it?
- 13-How would you prefer to participate in the "nükleersiz gelecek" campaign of Greenpeace on their website?
- 14- How would you describe your activity while you are surfing Greenpeace webpage, do you feel that you can influence the content of the page on and does that effect your participation on their campaign? Do you have any suggestion that would increase these activities of Greenpeace website?

15- Are you aware of the fact that Greenpeace Mediterranean now actively campaign from bases in Istanbul, Tel Aviv and Beirut?

16- What is your idea about the cultural recognition by considering that the site was design for three different regions?

17-Did Fukushima nuclear accident influence your decision about nuclear planting in turkey?

18-By considering the fact that green-peace originally is a western organization how would you explain the influence of western environmentalism on their campaigns in turkey?

19-Would you prefer to leave comments on the news coverage that Greenpeace puts on their website?



## **Appendix B: Article 1 and 2 Turkish Version**

### **Article 1) Fukuşima'da bir reaktörde daha erime!**

Japonya Fukuşima Nükleer Santrali'nde yaşanan felaket kontrol altına alınmadan devam ediyor. Tokyo Elektrik Şirketi (TEPCO) yaptığı yeni açıklamada, 1 numaralı reaktördeki su seviyesinin 1 metrenin altına indiği ve yakıtın şu anda tamamen açıkta olduğunu ifade etti. Bu da erimenin kontrol altına alınmadığını gösteriyor. Oysa şirket daha önce 1, 2 ve 3 No'lu reaktörlerde durumun kontrolde olduğuna yönelik açıklamalar yapmıştı.

Bu aynı zamanda TEPCO tarafından kamuoyu ile paylaşılan, su, sıcaklık ve basınç ölçüm seviyelerinin de doğru olmadığını ortaya koyuyor. Greenpeace Akdeniz İklim ve Enerji Kampanyası Sorumlusu Pınar Aksoğan konuya ilişkin "Yakıt çubukları tamamen açığa çıktığına ve erime devam ettiğine göre, reaktör kalbinin koruma kabının altında daha fazla erimekte olan yakıt olması çok muhtemel" dedi.

Aksoğan sözlerine şöyle devam etti: "Erimekte olan yakıt reaktörün tabanını eriterek toprağa karışırsa çok daha büyük bir felakete dönüşecek. Bu aynı zamanda, nükleer enerjinin hiçbir zaman güvenli olmadığını ve felaketin boyutları Fukuşima'daki seviyeye ulaştığında asla kontrol altına alınamayacağını kanıtıdır."

### **Article2 ) Japonya adım attı, sıra Türkiye'de**

Japonya'nın yeni nükleer enerji santrallerini iptal etme konusundaki girişimi Türkiye Hükümeti'ne ve tüm dünyaya örnek olmalı.

Japonya Başbakanı Naoto Kan, dün yaptığı basın açıklamasında Japonya'da yeni nükleer santral inşaatı planlarının iptali ile ilgili teklif sundu ve Japonya'nın uzun

dönemli enerji politikalarının gözden geçirileceğini açıkladı. Bu açıklama Japonya'nın enerji politikalarını temiz ve yenilenebilir teknolojilerin kullanıldığı bir yola yönlendirebilir.

Greenpeace Akdeniz İklim ve Enerji Kampanyası Sorumlusu Pınar Aksoğan, konuyla ilgili olarak "Nükleer teknolojinin en gelişmiş ülkelerden biri olduğu Japonya, nükleer enerjinin risklerini vatandaşlarına yüklemenin ne kadar tehlikeli olduğunu, aldığı bu kadar ile tüm dünyaya gösterdi. Yeni kazaları beklemek yerine Türkiye Hükümeti de Japonya'nın ve diğer dünya hükümetlerinin aldığı nükleer enerjiyi sorgulama kararına katılmalıdır" dedi.

Fukuşima'da yaşanmakta olan nükleer felaket başta Japonya olmak üzere, pek çok ülkenin nükleer enerji politikalarını gözden geçirmeye ve radikal kararlar almaya zorladı. Japonya'da ilk defa Başbakan tarafından bir nükleer santralin -Hamaoka Santrali- faaliyetinin durdurulması talep edildi ve bu talep gerçekleşti.

## **Appendix C: Article 1 and 2 English Version**

### **Article 1; There Is another Melted Reactor n Fukushima**

The disaster in Japan's Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant is still not under control. Tokyo Electric Company (TEPCO) in her new announcement stated that the water level in the reactor number 1 has dropped below 1 meter and the radioactive fuel is now open. This means that the meltdown in the reactor is still not under control. However the company previously announced that the situation is under control in the reactors 1, 2 and 3.

This also proves that the previously shared water, temperature and pressure announcements by TEPCO were not true. Greenpeace Mediterranean Climate and Energy Campaign Representative Pinar Aksoğan stated that “Now that the fuel rods are totally exposed and the meltdown continues, it is highly probable that there is more melting fuel under the protection reservoir of the reactor core”.

### **Article 2; Japan Took the Step, Now It's Turkey's Turn**

The attempt on cancelling the projects for new nuclear power plants by Japan must be an example for the Turkish government and for the rest of the world.

Yesterday in the press conference, the prime minister of Japan Naoto Kan made an announcement about canceling the plans about construction of new nuclear power plants in Japan and stated that Japan's long term energy plans are going to be revised. This statement can direct Japan's energy policies to a cleaner and renewable future.

Greenpeace Mediterranean Climate and Energy Campaigns Representative Pinar Aksoğan “ With this decision, Japan which is one of the most technologically developed countries in nuclear energy showed the rest of the world how dangerous it is to make your people face the risks of nuclear energy. Instead of waiting for the new accidents, the Turkish government also has to agree with the questioning of nuclear energy. The nuclear disaster happening in Fukushima pushed many countries, starting with Japan to revise their nuclear energy policies and take radical decisions. For the first time in Japan the prime minister offered to end the activities in a nuclear power plant “Hamoka Plant” and this offer was applied.