

## Eco-Linguistics in Actions: Using Environmental Themes to Foster English Language Skills Through Contextual Learning in High Schools

Asst. Prof. Hanan Dhia Alsalihi

Department of English, College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad, Iraq

[dr.hanan@coeduw.uobaghdad.edu.iq](mailto:dr.hanan@coeduw.uobaghdad.edu.iq)

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### Abstract:

This study examines the combination of environmental linguistics and English language teaching, noting the importance of environmental topics in enhancing language skills through contextual learning. The present study employed a mixed-methods approach. The study aimed to designing contextual learning plan, which focuses on real-world connections and relevance, can easily be used to engage eco-linguistic matters into high school English teachers' lesson plans. Also finding out the effect of using environmental themes to enhance English language skills for high school students through contextual learning and assessing students' experiences of incorporating eco-linguistic content into their English classes and enhancing their ecological realization. Finally, exploring students' motivation through eco-linguistic content. A total of 150 fourth intermediate female students from three high schools located in Baghdad/Al-Karkh (1<sup>st</sup>): AlYarmuk, AlNidhal, and AlMamoon High Schools for female students were chosen to be the sample of the study. Each school with 50 students was divided equally on two groups to be the experimental group, who taught according to the environmental themes approach and the control group who taught according to the conventional approach. Data collected from high school students in Iraq by designing lesson plan rich with environmental themes, constructing pre-test and a post-test, conducting focus group discussion and motivation questionnaire. The results of this study indicate a significant improvement in language skills and increased environmental realization among participants. The study recommends that curriculum developer to incorporate more eco-linguistic content into English language curricula and recommends teacher training on integrating environmental themes effectively.

**Keywords:** contextual learning, Eco-linguistics, environmental themes, experiences, high schools, realization.

## تفعيل اللغويات البيئية: استخدام الموضوعات البيئية لتعزيز مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية من خلال التعلم السياقي في المدارس الثانوية

أستاذ مساعد دكتور حنان ضياء الصالحي  
قسم اللغة الإنكليزية، كلية التربية للبنات،

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مجلة آداب الكوفة - جامعة الكوفة مرخصة بموجب ترخيص المشاع الإبداعي ٤.٠ الدولي.



**المخلص:**

تبحث هذه الدراسة في الجمع بين اللغويات البيئية وتعليم اللغة الإنجليزية، مع الإشارة إلى أهمية الموضوعات البيئية في تعزيز المهارات اللغوية من خلال التعلم السياقي. استخدمت الدراسة الحالية منهج مختلط الأساليب. تهدف الدراسة إلى تصميم خطة تعلم سياقية، تركز على الروابط والأهمية في العالم الواقعي، ويمكن استخدامها بسهولة لإشراك المسائل اللغوية البيئية في خطط دروس مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية في المدارس الثانوية. أيضًا معرفة تأثير استخدام الموضوعات البيئية لتعزيز مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية لدى طلاب المدارس الثانوية من خلال التعلم السياقي بالإضافة إلى تقييم تجارب الطلاب في دمج المحتوى اللغوي البيئي في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية وتعزيز إدراكهم البيئي. وأخيرًا، استكشاف دوافع الطلاب من خلال المحتوى اللغوي البيئي. تم اختيار ١٥٠ طالبة من طالبات الصف الرابع المتوسط من ثلاث مدارس ثانوية تقع في بغداد/الكرخ (الأولى): ثانوية اليرموك والنضال والمأمون للطالبات ليكونوا عينة الدراسة. تضم كل مدرسة ٥٠ طالبة مقسمة بالتساوي على مجموعتين لتكون المجموعة التجريبية التي تدرس وفق منهج الموضوعات البيئية والمجموعة الضابطة التي تدرس وفق المنهج التقليدي. تم جمع البيانات من طالبات المدارس الثانوية في العراق من خلال تصميم خطة درس غنية بالموضوعات البيئية، وبناء الاختبار القبلي، والاختبار البعدي، وإجراء مناقشة جماعية مركزة واستبيان التحفيز. وتشير نتائج هذه الدراسة إلى تحسن كبير في المهارات اللغوية وزيادة الإدراك البيئي لدى المشاركين. توصي الدراسة مطوري المناهج بدمج المزيد من المحتوى اللغوي البيئي في مناهج اللغة الإنجليزية وتوصي بتدريب المدرسين على دمج الموضوعات البيئية بشكل فعال.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** التعلم السياقي، اللغويات البيئية، المواضيع البيئية، المدارس الثانوية، الخبرات، الإدراك.

**Introduction**

The discipline of Eco Linguistics was founded in 1972 by Norwegian linguist Einar Haugen, who introduced the idea of language ecology. He employed a metaphorical framework that draws parallels between living organisms and their environments. In this analogy, language is likened to an organism, while its environment encompasses the social practices inherent in cultural, educational, political, and belief systems. This biological metaphor leads to the understanding that languages exist within a familial structure, where they can interbreed, diversify, and sustain themselves; failure to do so may result in the extinction of a language. Haugen viewed language ecology as a distinct approach within linguistics, defining it as "a study of interactions between any given language and its environment" (Haugen, 1972, p. 323).

The ecology of language was first proposed by Einar Haugen in 1970, highlighting the relationships between languages in multilingual society and in the human mind. In the decades that followed, various linguistic disciplines began to integrate ecological factors such as interconnections, environmental context, and diversity into their research.



By the early 1990s, these diverse methodologies coalesced into the field of Eco linguistics, which investigates the interplay between language and the environment. This development resulted in a significant number of research articles published across various journals and thematic volumes, leading to the compilation of a Reader that aggregates key contributions to Eco linguistic studies over the last thirty years.

Notably, Sapir (1949) highlighted the link between a language's lexicon and the physical and social contexts of its speakers. Humboldt regarded linguistic diversity as essential for the evolution of human thought and worldviews. George Steiner also examined linguistic diversity, questioning the absence of a universal language among humans despite shared physical and cognitive characteristics. He analyzed the reasons and consequences of language diversification, pondering whether it has obstructed or advanced human development. Alwin Fill discusses the various branches within the field, while Peter Miihlhausler focuses on the language used in environmental discourse. Miihlhausler points out the inadequacies of English and other languages in effectively conveying environmental issues, underscoring the necessity of recognizing alternative linguistic perspectives. Overall, the Reader acts as a valuable resource for linguist's eager to delve deeper into Eco linguistics, offering a variety of viewpoints on the connections between language, culture, and the environment.

Following Haugen's framework of language ecology, several linguists have formulated theories of language grounded in ecological principles. Consequently, the scope of Eco linguistics has broadened significantly, encompassing various domains; however, the most pertinent aspect to this paper pertains to the biological, physical, and social contexts of the environment. In other words, the Eco linguistics discussed herein aligns with the definition that characterizes it as "the ecological approach to language takes into consideration the complex network of relations occurring between environment, languages and people speaking these languages" (Wendel, 2005, p. 51).

In this context, the term "environment" refers to the natural, social, and cultural settings of the individuals who communicate in these languages. The languages in question may include those utilized for everyday communication and those learned in formal or informal educational settings, such as schools. The present study will try to answer the following questions:

1. Can eco-linguistic themes be effectively integrated into English language education lesson plans?
2. Does using environmental themes significantly enhance English language skills for high school students through contextual learning in the experimental group compared to the control group?
3. Do students have positive experiences with the incorporation of eco-linguistic content into their English classes, and does it enhance their ecological realization?
4. Are high school students highly motivated by eco-linguistic content?

### **The Problem of the Study**

The teachers face challenges in using methods of teaching focusing on integrating environment themes into their curricula effectively. They suffer to mix natural topics into their lesson plans, struggling against different challenges that prevent them to make students get involved with the crucial subjects while their students still inactive and weak in learning English language skills (Palmer, 1998). It takes time to implement new ideas and policies (Clark Jr, 2011). On the other hand, students in high schools are unable to use the language skills properly and they face difficulty in learning English (Alsalihi H. 2020).

### **Significance of the Study**

This research has a great importance for numerous reasons. First, it investigates the complicated connection between language, culture and

the nature. This study adds magic touches and new points of view to the scholarship by analyzing the essential role of eco-linguistics in the educational context. It sheds the light on the significance of recognizing how our perspectives about nature crisis around us are shaped by our language and how the way that educational lessons are able to reflect these themes.

Second, this study provides active plans for teachers who are enthusiastic to engage sustainability themes into their lessons' plans. A lot of indicators are encouraged to raising the students' responsibility towards nature but they maybe lack to the resources, knowledge, or guidance on how to effectively do so.

Third, this study serves as a useful reference for teachers by presenting to them effective strategies and important methods for integrating Eco-linguistic themes into teaching language lessons. This study seeks to stimulate them to provoke a significant link from their learning experiences, which reverberate with their students that can help to raise students' understanding about facing natural challenges.

Fourth, the results of this study may form a significant part in improving curriculum growth at numerous educational scales. It stimulates educators and tutors to think again in their methods to lessons plan by focusing on the binary advantages of raising language skills while enhancing natural realization.

Finally in this way, the study supports various educational philosophy that link together developed linguistic skills with the pressing necessity for sustainability, ultimately sharing to a more responsible and aware generation of students. Through these instructions, this study seeks to stress on the meaningful effect on all of the academic and educational field as a whole.

### **Aims:**

The present study aimed at:

- 1- Designing contextual learning plan, which focus on real-world connections and relevance, easily can be used to engage eco-linguistic matters into high school English teachers' lesson plans.

- 2- Finding out the effect of using environmental themes to enhance English language skills for high school students through contextual learning.
- 3- Assessing students' experiences of incorporating eco-linguistic content into their English classes and enhancing their ecological realization.
- 4- Exploring students' motivation through eco-linguistic content.

### **Scope:**

The present study is limited to:

- 1- Using environmental themes to foster English language skills through contextual learning.
  - 2- Fourth intermediate level at AlYarmuk, AlNidhal, and AlMamoon High Schools for female students in Baghdad/Al-Karkh (1<sup>st</sup>).
  - 3- English for Iraq, 4<sup>th</sup> Preparatory students' book by Caroline De Messieres and Edward Elden.
- 3- The first term from academic year 2024-2025.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Eco-Linguistics and EFL Classrooms**

English has become the main foreign language required for study in both junior and senior high schools in Iraq, making it a permanent part of the educational curriculum. The goal of teaching English as a foreign language is to help students learn to identify and distinguish between correct and incorrect, as well as appropriate and inappropriate, uses of the language. Most instruction takes place in classroom settings, and outside of these educational environments, English is not typically used for daily communication among people.

The efficiency of teaching the English language in the classroom depends on the learning materials. Students do not often have a choice for exposure to English. So, resources must enhance students' motivation and engagement with the environment and activity. Many materials used in English as Foreign Language (EFL) instruction do not reflect the context learners are likely to encounter during their everyday life.



Students, instead, face content that does not resonate with real life as material extensively uses formal structured English with help of standardized text and dialogues. When there is a disconnect between effort and outcome, students fail to develop an effective practice and develop skills in the language. Moreover, many teachers use curriculum materials strictly and that limit the guidance to the student on how to use and apply the language in practical contexts.

To incorporate Eco linguistics in the EFL classroom, teachers need to optimize their education materials and tasks as creatively as possible. The objective of this approach is to enhance learning by connecting students' real-life contexts with classroom happenings. The materials to be taught must follow the junior high syllabus, which can be quite different some schools still use the old School-Based Curriculum (KTSP) while others already use Curriculum 2013 (K-13).

Although they may vary, both curricula are anchored in an overarching Genre-Based Approach that highlights transactional and functional texts. Users can create simple short texts to different long texts. The curriculum is basically based on four language skills – listening, reading, speaking and writing (Emilia, 2011).

Tenth-grade students are slowly learning English. Therefore, they are introduced to simple texts. They get to learn how to greet and introduce their friends. They also learn how to write about a person, place or thing. This paper presents materials for the 10th grade level. The texts will now be longer, though there are still some short ones. As a result, the focus of language teaching changes to productive skills, especially speaking and writing, but also uses materials to develop receptive skills like listening and reading (Prima & Tampubolon, 2021).

Eco Linguistics can be incorporated into effective EFL instruction through a teaching approach based on behaviourism, contextual teaching and learning (CTL), and scientific approach (SA). A Theory developed by B.F. Skinner as noted by Morris, et. al. (2005), Skinner (1904–1990) says that all learning is behaviour and behaviour affects the student considerably.

## The Benefits of Eco linguistics in English as a Foreign Language Classrooms

Integrating Eco linguistics into the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classroom offers several advantages, particularly in terms of language and ecology. From a linguistic perspective, Eco linguistics connects learning materials to the natural, social, and cultural contexts familiar to students, making the content more relevant and accessible. By using familiar environments, students can engage more deeply with the language, creating a more stimulating learning atmosphere that enhances their connection to the materials and boosts their enjoyment of the learning process. Furthermore, incorporating local languages and dialects emphasizes the significance of students' linguistic backgrounds, which can enhance their comprehension and retention of English language concepts (Coffey, 2020).

From an ecological standpoint, Eco linguistics underscores the relationship between language and the environment. By emphasizing ecological issues and the associated language, students can develop a more profound understanding of environmental challenges. This awareness may encourage them to engage in critical reflection on their roles within their communities and the broader global context. As they learn English, they can also be inspired to champion ecological sustainability and appreciate their local ecosystems and cultural narratives, thereby promoting both ecological stewardship and the preservation of cultural heritage (Stibbe, 2015).

This benefit is significantly supported by findings from various notable studies, including those by Kana'iaupuni et al. (2010), Luardini and Simbolon (2016), Singh and Espinoza-Herold (2017), and Tjendani (2017). In their 2010 study, Kana'iaupuni et al. examined the effects of culture-based education focused specifically on Hawaiian culture. Their results demonstrated a meaningful relationship between culturally relevant educational practices and the socio-emotional well-being of students. This positive impact on well-being was shown to affect not only emotional and social development but also academic performance,



particularly in mathematics and reading assessments. The strong community ties cultivated within the rich context of Hawaiian culture further empower students, enhancing their confidence in expressing and promoting their distinct cultural identities both inside and outside the classroom.

In the same boat, Singh and Espinoza-Herold (2017) refers to the benefits of education that is depending on culture of native students in the United States and areas that are around Asia. Their research concluded a profitable attachment among these educational approaches and different salutary student results, essentially in terms of developed socio-emotional entertainment, more civic arrangement, and expanded their motive for school. These benefits highlight the importance of culture-based education in connecting deeply with students, enhancing their completed educational cleverness.

Luardini and Simbolon (2016) found that we could apply Eco-linguistics to the process of teaching English language, essentially for first secondary students. They found that integrating recognized environmental synonyms, such as conventional words similar to rattan, palm, and numerus topical herbs, grow student encouragement and their interests in the field. The learning process will become more beneficial and influential through employing idioms that students already know.

Tjendani (2017) examines three essential benefits about teaching English through ecological linguistics effectiveness. The results shed the light on the significance of improving effective communication skills in different contexts, such as intra-cultural, inter-cultural, and trans-cultural situations. Tjendani finds that learners will be much easier adapted to the subjects which they have. They find it closely linked to their cultural backgrounds, as it contains various aspects of biology, sociology, and ideology. Then he deducts, from an ecological point of view, that human beings and nature are inseparable and deeply intertwined naturally. By mixing Eco-linguistics in the English language activities, students are able to refine and promote their sense of ecological recognition and liability. This educational method exceeds traditional language teaching;

it mixes ecological origins which stimulate students to improve their awareness for their environmental principles and the natural world at large. Students are taught both to respect and estimate their nature, and also, they are able to appreciate their nature and language inheritance and hoe to preserve it. This preservation allows students to understand the importance of this without feeling overwhelmed. The instructors work hardly to expand students' considerations by presenting them various method of Eco linguistics-based learning materials, and stimulating them to be more extrovert and considerate regarding each other's social realities and environments.

Moreover, this method encourages students to be have responsibility and self-reflection, especially for what related to the ecological problems hence they may testify in their natures. For instance, the troubles such as smoking in Central Kalimantan serve as a real-world context that students can engage with critically. Students be able to resolve those crucial crises and recognize dynamic solutions by challenging these local environmental crises. This will promote both their personal ability to become responsible individuals who are fixed up to solve environmental problems with empathy and insight. Through studying this, students will be equipped to be aware of participants by nature to inspect ecological perceptions, taking part effectively to their societies and the world at large.

## **Eco-Linguistics in Education**

Eco-linguistics explores the intricate relationship between language and ecological issues, emphasizing how our linguistic choices significantly influence our awareness and attitudes toward the environment (Haugen, 1972). This discipline posits that language is vital in shaping our perceptions and interactions with the natural world, thereby underscoring the importance of incorporating linguistic education into initiatives aimed at enhancing environmental consciousness.

## **Contextual Learning Strategies**

Contextual learning emphasizes the importance of connecting academic material to real-life situations, suggesting that students show greater

engagement when their studies are practically relevant (Sanjaya, 2007). This pedagogical approach enables educators to create learning environments that enhance student involvement and retention. For example, research has demonstrated that situating language instruction within meaningful contexts, such as discussions of environmental issues, can significantly improve student motivation and comprehension (Click Learn, 2024). Moreover, studies indicate that contextualized learning experiences facilitate better understanding and application of knowledge across various disciplines, thereby providing students with a stronger educational foundation (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2023). By delivering authentic learning experiences that resonate with students' lives, educators can foster deeper connections between language skills and their real-world applications.

## **Methodology**

### **Experimental Design**

A quasi-experimental design will be employed through which the experimental group getting an eco-linguistically enriched curriculum and a control group getting a standard curriculum. The researcher will apply the following methods for data collection:

- 1- Pretests and posttests to measure changes in English language skills proficiency.
- 2- Focus group discussions to gain qualitative insights into student experiences of incorporating eco-linguistic content into their English classes and enhancing their ecological realization.
- 3- Surveys to evaluate students' motivation through eco-linguistic content.

### **Population**

In the present study, the population represents all high schools in Baghdad/Al-Karkh (1<sup>st</sup>). There are 168 high schools.

## Sample

The researchers employed a stratified random sampling method to guarantee that the sample encompassed a diverse range of demographic backgrounds and attributes. This methodology was crucial for ensuring representation of various segments within the student population, thereby enabling the researchers to derive more precise and generalizable conclusions from the findings. A cohort of 150 high school students was meticulously selected from Baghdad/Al-Karkh (1<sup>st</sup>) district, in fourth preparatory level chosen from three high schools named: AlYarmuk, AlNidhal, and AlMamoon High Schools for female students, see table 1.

Table (1) sample of the study

High schools	Sample's groups	Students' number
AlYarmuk	(A) Control	25
	(B) Experimental	25
AlNidhal	(A) Control	25
	(B) Experimental	25
AlMamoon	(A) Control	25
	(B) Experimental	25

## Equivalence of the Sample Subjects

All students from the sample were equalized by two variables as shown below:

### - Age of Students

The two groups experimental and control in each school have been equalized in age variable by comparing the calculated T-value with the tabulated T-value with the degree of freedom 1.96 and level of significance at 0.05. The results showed that there are no significant differences between the experimental and control groups which means that the groups are equal in the age variable.

### - Pre-test

The researcher applied the pre-test on the whole sample groups before starting the experiment to insure equalization between each two experimental groups in one school. The T-test for two independent

samples was used. The mean value of the control groups was (8.33) at standard deviation (3.03). Whereas the mean value of the experimental groups was (7.67) at standard deviation (3.7). The calculated T-value was (0.866) which is smaller than the tabulated value (1.98) at degree of freedom (62) and level of significance (0.05) which means that all groups are equal in the pre-test performance.

## **Instruments**

### **Achievement test**

The achievement test constructed by the researcher. It included items related to vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, and writing skills. This achievement test is designed to assess students' linguistic performance based on Units One and Two of the "English for Iraq" 4<sup>th</sup> Intermediate book. The test evaluates four key skills: vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, and writing followed by rubrics for scoring scheme, see appendix (A) and (B). The test was subjected to a group of specialists in the field of study and they approved the validity of the test. Alpha Cronbach's formula was used and showed correlation value (0.82) which is suitable for reliability.

### **Lesson Planning**

An Eco-linguistics-based lesson plan is a structured approach that helps educators clarify their teaching goals by integrating relevant materials that focus on eco-linguistics content. In this study, the researcher collaborated with English language teachers from the fourth intermediate grade across three selected high schools. This approach details the systematic process the researcher followed to develop comprehensive lesson plans that promote meaningful student engagement and help achieve learning goals. The researcher started by defining clear and specific learning objectives. These objectives outlined the measurable outcomes that students should reach by the end of each lesson.

Working alongside teachers, the researcher chose suitable content that matches the defined learning objectives. This involves identifying relevant materials, resources, and tools that will effectively enhance

student learning, as well as incorporating a variety of content sources, such as textbooks, online resources, and multimedia, to address different learning styles. The next phase focuses on creating a comprehensive teaching and learning process that prioritizes students.

To accurately evaluate student understanding and progress, the researcher designed assessments that align with the established learning objectives. This stage includes the development of formative assessments, such as quizzes and reflective activities, to track student comprehension during the lesson. It also entails creating summative assessments to measure students' mastery of the learning objectives at the lesson's conclusion, along with providing self-assessment opportunities to promote metacognitive awareness and foster a sense of ownership over their learning.

This approach offers a systematic way to plan lessons, highlighting the significance of having clear objectives, relevant content, student motivation, and effective assessment, see appendix (C).

### **Focus Group**

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews discussions with small focus group of students from the same sample to collect their experiences of combining eco-linguistic content into their English classes. The researcher prepared four parts with eight questions related to the study objectives. The participants were (9) in total, see appendix (D).

### **Motivation Survey**

The researcher used a survey for motivation adapted from Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), (2004). This instrument is a 5-point Likert scale ranged from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree', derived from the original version with 7-point Likert scale. There were two sections in it: integrative and instrumental motivation with total (20) items each section with (10) items. The researcher used in this study the first section concerned with the integrative motivation (10) items, see table (2).

## **Experiment**

Each teacher will teach two groups (classes) for the experiment: one will serve as the control group, while the other will be the experimental group. After equalizing each two experimental groups in each school with age variable, a pre-test will be administered to both groups to assess their language performance levels. This pre-test constructed by the researcher, will include items related to vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, and writing skills. The motivation survey will be applied on the experimental groups to evaluate students' motivation before the experiment. After that, the teachers in the three schools will apply the teaching approach through lessons developed and designed by the researcher for the experimental group for a full course of study while the control group will be taught according to the conventional approach. The experiment will continue for three months, then at the end of the three-month experiment, the teachers, with the researcher will apply the post-test on the sample to discover any improvements. Then the researcher will conduct focus groups discussions with some students from the same sample to collect their experiences of combining eco-linguistic content into their English classes then the researcher will re-apply survey to evaluate students' motivation through eco-linguistic content.

## **Results and Data Analysis**

- 1- Results related to the first aim:** "Designing contextual learning plan, which focus on real-world connections and relevance, easily can be used to engage eco-linguistic matters into high school English teachers' lesson plans". The researcher with English teachers at the three schools constructed typical lesson plans that integrate eco-linguistic themes within the English language education normal lesson plans. The researcher and teachers inserted some environmental terms and present them within the lesson progress and engage the students in activities practicing use these terms through their original lessons' contents as shown in appendix (C). The study demonstrated that eco-linguistic

themes were successfully incorporated into lesson plans, enhancing the relevance and engagement of English classes which matches the first aim of the study and positively answer the first question.

- 2- **Results related to the second aim:** “Finding out the effect of using environmental themes to enhance English language skills for high school students through contextual learning”. Pretest and posttest results for the three schools showed a significant improvement in English language skills among students in the experimental groups who exposed to eco-linguistic content and the mean score for the pre-test was (66.7) and for the post-test was (81.8) while the mean score for the pre-test in the control group who didn’t expose to eco-linguistic content, was (65.3) and for the post-test was (67.0). The results showed that the mean score of the experimental post-test was higher than the control group score and indicated 15-point improvement, therefore the second aim is achieved and the second question is positively answered.
- 3- **Results related to the third aim:** “Assessing students’ experiences of incorporating eco-linguistic content into their English classes and enhancing their ecological realization”. The focus group discussions showed that students in general had positive experiences with eco-linguistic content, reporting increased realization and interest in environmental issues. Many students noted that learning about environmental themes made their English classes more engaging, add reality to their lessons and relevant. The results showed that the mean score of positive experiences for all experimental groups in the three schools was 4.2 and that for ecological realization was 3.8 therefore the third aim is achieved and the third question is positively answered.
- In the first part of the discussion, all participants understand that the meaning of eco-linguistics is relating English language learning to the environmental topics. While the first impression



for five of them was “amazing” and “energizing” while four of them “shocked” and “surprised” by inserting environmental topics to their lessons.

- In the second part of the discussion, all students said: “yes, these topics mentioned during our lessons increased our realization about the environmental issues around us”. They mentioned that: “we’d never think about these ideas before and even we don’t know the importance of these terms in our life”. Also, six students indicate that: “these terms changed our daily life routines and regimes positively with notion” while three students said: “no changes happened to us in our life”.
- In the third part of the discussion, one student mentioned: “I challenge the use of environmental terms in sentences as they were new and not familiar for me”, three students state that “the challenge is how to pronounce these new somehow long words” other students said: “the challenge is about how we connect our writing or speaking to the environment and nature”. All students suggest keep using these environmental issues in English lessons and other lessons to be familiar and learn more.
- In the fourth part, all students assert that: “environmental themes affect their language skills positively and particularly in areas lie vocabulary acquisition and communication about environmental topics”. Most students agree that they will apply what they have learned through their life and study except one student disagree with them.

**4- Results related to the fourth aim:** “Exploring students’ motivation through eco-linguistic content”. The survey applied before and after the intervention on the three experimental groups which represent 75 students. The results indicated that students were more motivated to learn English when environmental themes were integrated. The relevance and real-world applications of eco-linguistic content were cited as key factors enhancing motivation as shown in the table 2. Therefore, the

fourth aim is achieved and the fourth question is positively answered.



**Table (2) Students' Motivation Averages**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
1	Learning English through eco-linguistic content is enjoyable and fulfilling for me.	11.9	88.1	-	-	-
2	Learning English through eco-linguistic content is important because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people with different environmental topics.	-	35.7	-	64.3	-
3	Learning English through eco-linguistic content is important because it will enable me to better understand and appreciate the English art and literature.	27.9	55.3	16.8	-	-
4	Learning English through eco-linguistic content is important because I will be able to participate more freely in the activities of other cultural groups.	77.2	21.1	-	1.7	-
5	Learning English through eco-linguistic content is important because it will help me get many friends from many parts of the world.	54.3	-	33.5	12.2	-
6	Learning English through eco-linguistic content is important because it will allow me to learn about the culture and social life of English-speaking people.	69.8	30.2	-	-	-

7	Learning English through eco-linguistic content enables me to transfer my knowledge to other people e.g. giving directions to tourists and using natural expressions.	47.6	52.4	-	-	-
8	Learning English through eco-linguistic content is important because allow me to understand the content of books, films, music, and other content in English.	90.3	9.7	-	-	-
9	Learning English through eco-linguistic content enables me to participate freely in academic, social, professional and environmental activities among other cultural groups.	88.2	10.6	1.2	-	-
10	Learning English through eco-linguistic content enables me to discuss interesting eco-topics in English with the people from other national backgrounds.	50	33.4	-	16.6	-

## Conclusion

The present study concluded: firstly, that eco-linguistic themes were successfully incorporated into lesson plans, enhancing the relevance and engagement of English classes which matches the first aim of the study and the first question “Can eco-linguistic themes be effectively integrated into English language education lesson plans?” is positively answered. Secondly, that the mean score of the experimental post-test was higher than the control group score and indicated 15-point improvement, therefore the second aim is achieved and the second question “Does using environmental themes significantly enhance English language skills for high school students through contextual learning in the experimental group compared to the control group? is positively

answered. Thirdly, that the mean score of positive experiences for all experimental groups in the three schools was 4.2 and that for ecological realization was 3.8 therefore the third aim is achieved and the third question “Do students have positive experiences with the incorporation of eco-linguistic content into their English classes, and does it enhance their ecological realization?” is positively answered. Lastly, that students were more motivated to learn English when environmental themes were integrated. The relevance and real-world applications of eco-linguistic content were cited as key factors enhancing motivation therefore, the fourth aim is achieved and the fourth question “Are high school students highly motivated by eco-linguistic content?” is positively answered. Teachers need to have a more innovative approach in producing and constructing of lesson plans that encompassed eco-linguistic views. Linking local phenomena to the instructional materials can make the learning experience more relevant for the students. Constructed from a careful consideration of Eco linguistics, especially in terms of the teaching and learning of environmental linguistic expressions, will lead to a more purposeful way of teaching and learning. Thus, it is important to create didactic material that addresses this linguistic aspect of the environment.

## **Recommendations**

The present study recommends that firstly, curriculum developer to incorporate more eco-linguistic content into English language curricula. Secondly, it recommends teacher training on integrating environmental themes effectively. Finally, it recommends to conduct longitudinal studies to assess long-term impact on language skills and ecological realization for future research.

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- 2- **Conflict of Interest Statement:** (The authors confirm that there are no conflicts of interest that could affect the content of this research.)
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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix (A) Achievement Test**

- **Total Marks:** 40
- **Duration:** 45 minutes

### **Sections**

#### **1. Vocabulary (7 marks)**

*Choose the correct answer for each question.*

1. Choose the correct word: The opposite of "happy" is \_\_\_\_.  
a) sad  
b) joyful  
c) excited **(1 mark)**
2. Fill in the blank: She enjoys \_\_\_\_ books in her free time.  
a) read  
b) reading  
c) reads **(1 mark)**
3. Match the words with their definitions:  
a) Pollution  
b) Conservation  
c) Biodiversity

1. The variety of life in the world or in a particular habitat or ecosystem.





2. The act of preserving and protecting the environment.
3. The introduction of harmful substances into the environment.

**(3 marks)**

4. Choose the correct word: They need to \_\_\_\_ their waste to protect the environment.

- a) reduce
- b) increase
- c) ignore

**(1 mark)**

5. Fill in the blank with the correct form of the word: The \_\_\_\_ of plastic bags is harmful to wildlife. (use "dispose")

**(1 mark)**

## **2. Grammar (9 marks)**

*Select the best answer or fill in the blanks.*

1. Which of the following sentences is correct?

- a) She go to school every day.
- b) She goes to school every day.
- c) She going to school every day.

**(1 mark)**

2. Fill in the blank with the correct form of the verb: They \_\_\_\_ (play) football every Saturday.

**(2 marks)**

3. Identify the error in this sentence: "He don't like to swim." **(2 marks)**

4. Choose the correct preposition: We are interested \_\_\_\_ learning about environmental issues.

- a) at
- b) in
- c) on

**(2 marks)**



5. Fill in the blanks with appropriate articles (a, an, the): I saw \_\_\_\_ elephant at \_\_\_\_ zoo yesterday. **(2 marks)**

### **3. Reading Comprehension (8 marks)**

*Read the following passage and answer the questions below. Passage:*

Tom is a student who enjoys nature. He often goes on hikes with his friends, exploring different parks and observing various plants and animals. Tom believes it is essential to take care of our environment because it provides us with fresh air and beautiful landscapes.

#### **Questions:**

1. What does Tom enjoy doing? **(2 marks)**
2. Why does Tom think it is important to take care of our environment? **(2 marks)**
3. List two activities Tom does with his friends based on the passage. **(2 marks)**
4. What can we learn from Tom's attitude towards nature? Provide one sentence response. **(2 marks)**

### **4. Writing (16 marks)**

*Write three paragraphs about why it is important to protect the environment.*

- Use at least three vocabulary words you learned from Units One and Two (e.g., pollution, conservation, biodiversity).
- Make sure your paragraph has a clear topic sentence and supporting details.

#### **Scoring distribution**

- Vocabulary: 7 points
- Grammar: 9 points
- Reading Comprehension: 8 points

- Writing: 16 points
- Total: 40 points

## **Appendix (B)**

Rubrics for assessing writing adapted from Andrade (1997)

criteria	Limited 1	Adequate 2	Proficient 3	Excellent 4
structure	Bad organization of topic subtopic	Acceptable organization of topic subtopic	Satisfactory organization of topic subtopic	Excellent organization of topic subtopic
grammar	Never using correct grammar in statements	Sometimes using correct grammar in statements	Often using correct grammar in statements	Always use correct grammar in statements
terminology	Never using the precise technical term	Sometimes using the precise technical term	Often using the precise technical term	Always using the precise technical term
content	Never present concrete facts with evidence	Sometimes present concrete facts with evidence	Often present concrete facts with evidence	Always present concrete facts with evidence

## **Appendix (C)**

Eco-linguistic Lesson Plan

1. Title of Your Lesson: A School Magazine: Exploring Contributions and Possessives.
2. Date: November 25, 2024
3. Unit and Lesson Number: Unit 1, Lesson 1
4. Objectives:

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Read a poster introducing the school magazine and answer comprehension questions.



2. Arrange items in alphabetical order accurately.
  3. Match vocabulary words with their definitions to enhance their vocabulary related to magazines.
  4. Use the possessive 's' correctly in sentences.
  5. Discuss environmental issues related to the content of a school magazine, demonstrating increased realization of sustainability topics.
5. Gather Materials and Resources
- **Textbook:** English for Iraq (Student's Book)
  - **Activity Book:** English for Iraq (Activity Book)
  - **Visual Aids:** Posters of magazine sections, vocabulary flashcards
  - **Technology:** Projector for displaying examples and definitions
  - **Handouts:** Worksheets for matching words and definitions, possessive 's' exercises
  - **Environmental Themes Materials:** Articles or excerpts related to environmental issues for discussion
6. Language
- **Focus Language:** Possessive 's'
7. Vocabulary
- **Key Vocabulary:** Magazine, Monthly, Team, Contribution, Below, Section (n), Event, Cartoon (n), Interview (n, v), Joke (n), News, Poetry, In print, Definition, Description, Article, Report (n), Well-known, pollution, recycling, conservation, biodiversity.
8. Routines and Warm-Up Activity
- Engaging Activity:**
- Begin with a class discussion about school magazines.

- Ask students if their school has a magazine and what they think about it.
- Elicit ideas about what they would like to see in a school magazine (e.g., articles, cartoons, interviews).
- Introduce the concept of sustainability and how magazines can raise awareness about environmental issues.

## 9. Presentation

### **Introduce New Language Concepts:**

- Read the introductory text about the school magazine as a class.
- Address any vocabulary questions and clarify meanings.
- Introduce key vocabulary related to the environment (e.g., pollution, recycling, conservation, biodiversity).
- Use the vocabulary in context by providing sentences or scenarios. Encourage students to create their own sentences using the new words.
- Discuss the sections of the magazine briefly without going into detail.
- Write examples of possessive forms on the board (e.g., "Jad's book," "the girls' team") and explain the use of apostrophe 's'.
- Connect magazine content to sustainability topics by discussing how articles can inform readers about environmental issues with reference to: pollution, conservation, biodiversity, recycling.

## 10. Guided Practice Activities:

- **Read the Notice:** Students read the introductory notice and answer comprehension questions in pairs using their Activity Books.
- **Alphabetical Order Activity:** Provide a list of magazine sections and have students arrange them in alphabetical order individually or in pairs.
- **Vocabulary Matching:** Distribute handouts where students match vocabulary words to their definitions.

**11. Production Stage: Independent Tasks:**

- **Possessive 's' Exercise:** Students complete sentences using the correct form of possessive 's' based on prompts provided in their Activity Books.
- **Writing Assignment:** Have students write a short paragraph describing what they would contribute to a school magazine, using at least three vocabulary words from the lesson while also considering an environmental theme.

**12. Formative Assessments:**

- Observe student participation during pair work and discussions.
- Check answers during feedback sessions for comprehension questions and vocabulary matching.
- Review possessive exercises and writing assignments for accuracy.

**13. Homework**

- Assign students to create a mock article or section for a school magazine on an environmental topic of their choice, incorporating vocabulary from the lesson and demonstrating their understanding of sustainability.

**14. Reflection and Feedback**

Conclude the lesson with a reflection session:

- Ask students what they learned about magazines and how they can apply this knowledge to contribute to their own school magazine.
- Encourage feedback on activities, asking what they enjoyed most or found challenging.
- Discuss how learning about these topics can help them think critically about sustainability issues in their community.

This lesson plan integrates eco-linguistic themes by encouraging students to think about contributions to their school magazine while focusing on language skills such as reading comprehension, vocabulary development,

grammar usage, and critical thinking related to environmental consciousness. It aims to foster both linguistic skills and realization of global sustainability objectives among high school students in Baghdad.

### **Appendix (D)**

Focus group questions used for assessing students' experiences and realization

#### **Preparation Stage:**

- 1- Select participants: the researcher chose three students from the experimental group in each school; therefore 9 students will participate in the focus group discussion.
- 2- Select a comfortable place: the researcher chose a suitable classroom in AlYarmuk High School for all students to gather for discussion with changing the seating shape to be in a circle shape to enhance group discussion.
- 3- Moderator: the researcher was the person who guide the discussion and rise questions.
- 4- Time: the range time for the discussion is 60-90 minutes.
- 5- Rules: the researcher clarified that this discussion will follow respectful conversation and participants are encouraged to share thoughts freely.
- 6- Audio recording consent: the researcher informed the participants that the discussion will be audio recorded to enhance transcription and data analysis.

### **Introduction**

First of all, the researcher would like to thank all of you for participating in this focus group. It is really important to hear about your experiences regarding incorporating eco-linguistic content into your English classes. Your feedback will help the researcher to understand how themes impact your learning and ecological realization for research reasons.

### **Questions**

#### **Part 1: Background knowledge**

- 1- Introduction to Eco-linguistics: what do you understand by the term “eco-linguistics”?



- 2- First impression: what were your first thoughts when environmental themes were introduced into your English lessons?

**Part 2: Ecological realization**

- 3- Realization of environmental issues: Have the eco-linguistic themes in your English classes increased your realization of environmental issues? If yes, how?
- 4- Behavioral change: Have you made any changes in your daily life as a result of learning about environmental issues in English classes? If yes, how?

**Part 3: Challenges and suggestions**

- 5- Challenges: what are the challenges you faced while learning about environmental themes in English class?
- 6- Suggestions: what do you suggest in order to make improvement about eco-linguistic content in English classes?

**Part 4: Reflections**

- 7- Impact on language skills: how do you thin learning environmental themes has affected your English language skills?
- 8- Future application: how do you see yourself applying the knowledge and skills gained from eco-linguistic content in the future?

**Data Analysis**

- **Transcribe Recordings:** Transcribe the recordings to analyze the qualitative data.
- **Identify Themes:** Look for recurring themes and patterns in students' responses to understand their experiences and perceptions.