اللغويات البيئية في الفصل الدراسي: تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية من خلال المواضيع البيئية لطلاب المرحلة المتوسطة

Eco-Linguistics in the Classroom: Teaching English through Environmental Topics for Intermediate School Learners

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الملخص

يبحث هذا البحث في توظيف علم اللغة البيئي (الإيكولنغويستكس) في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية لطلبة المدارس المتوسطة من خلال تناول موضــوعات بيئية داخل الدروس. أُجريت الدراسة في متوسطة زها حديد وبلغ عدد الطلبة (360) طالبًا موزعين على ثلاث شعب. يتناول البحث كيفية دمج المعلّمين لموضـــوعات بيئية مثل التلوّث، التغيّر المناخي، إعادة التدوير، والتنوّع الحيوي داخل دروس اللغة الإنجليزية بهدف تنمية المهارات اللغوية والوعي البيئي لدى الطلبة. تم جمع البيانات من خلال اسـتبانات الطلبة، مقابلات المعلّمين، والملاحظات الصـفّية، والتي ســـاعدت في تقييم مدى اندماج الطلبة وتطوّر المفردات والفهم والاســتيعاب إضــافة إلى المهارات التواصلية لديهم. وبيّنت النتائج أن الاستراتيجيات الإيكولغوية مثل المناقشات، المشاريع، الوســائط المتعدّدة، المســرحيات التعليمية، وألعاب المفردات أســهمت في تعزيز الكفاءة اللغوية والوعي البيئي لدى المتعلمين. وخلصــت الدراســة إلى أن إدخال المحتوى البيئي في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية يوفّر تجارب تعلّم ذات معنى وأكثر تفاعلاً وتحفيزًا لطلبة المرحلة المتوسطة.

Abstract

This study examines the application of eco-linguistics in teaching English to intermediate school pupils through environmental topics. The study is conducted in Zuha Hadid Intermediate School and has (360) pupils in three classes. The paper looks into how teachers incorporate environmental education such as pollution, climate change, recycling, and biodiversity in English lessons in order to improve language skills and ecological sensitivity of the students. We obtained data as part of the data acquisition in student surveys, interviews with teachers, classroom observations, and classroom observations led to an evaluation of the engagement, vocabulary acquisition, comprehension, and communication competence of the learners by analyzing the same with student interviews and student surveys. The investigation found that eco-linguistic strategies (discussions, projects, multimedia, role-plays, vocabulary games) were found to enhance linguistic competence and environmental awareness and improve the ecological consciousness. The study concludes that adding environmental content to the teaching of English will provide meaningful and interactive, motivating learning experiences for intermediate students.

1.1 Introduction

Environmental topics in teaching English integrate language learning and environmental awareness. Eco-linguistics in the classroom assists students to learn vocabulary, grammar and communication skills when discussing the real world environmental issues. In the case of intermediate school students, environmental content is more interesting and meaningful in lessons. Pollution, climate change, recycling, and biodiversity are some of the topics that help students relate to real-life experiences and enhance their English proficiency (Stibbe, 2015, P. 94).

Environmental issues facilitate content-based instruction (CBI) and in this approach, learners learn language by engaging in meaningful content. Students are exposed to real texts, videos and discussions on environmental issues. They read, write, listen and speak in an intentional setting. This assists in-between learners to internalize vocabulary and grammar. In addition, the inclusion of environmental issues covers various learning styles, involves students and offers chances of interactive learning (Coyle, Hood, and Marsh, 2010, P. 104).

Eco-linguistics also helps students to critically examine human-nature relationships. Students talk about how the environment is reflected by the society using language, and they distinguish between harmful and beneficial discourses. These activities help students to form their opinion, support ideas and suggest solutions in English. They become environmentally conscious and acquire cultural and social knowledge of environmental concerns (Alexander and Stibbe, 2014, P. 104).

The study targets intermediate school students in Zuha Hadid Intermediate School. The number of students is 360, and there are 3 classes. The study focuses on the application of the eco-linguistic principles in teaching English using environmental issues. It explores the vocabulary development, discussion skills, and the interest of learners in ecological issues. The paper also discusses how teachers incorporate environmental issues in language classes. This method emphasizes on the twofold purpose of enhancing language proficiency and environmental consciousness (Stoller, 2004, P. 83).

1.2 Problem of the Study

There are advantages of teaching English using environmental issues but there are also challenges. Educators need to choose the appropriate material and combine language goals successfully. Middle-level students can have problems with new vocabulary or complicated ecological ideas. Also, the teaching materials or resources that can be used in eco-linguistic lessons might be lacking. This paper aims to address the following questions:

1. What is meant by eco-linguistics in the classroom?

2. What are the main environmental topics and strategies used to teach English?

3. How do teachers apply eco-linguistic principles with intermediate school learners at Zuha Hadid Intermediate School?

1.3 Aims of the Study

The study aims to:

1. Presenting the meaning of eco-linguistics and its application in English classrooms.

2. Identifying environmental topics and teaching strategies used for intermediate learners.

3. Investigating how teachers integrate eco-linguistic content to develop students' language skills and ecological awareness.

1.4 Hypotheses of the Study

This research hypothesizes:

1. Eco-linguistics refers to teaching English using environmental topics to connect language learning with ecological awareness.

2. Various environmental topics, including pollution, climate change, biodiversity, recycling, and sustainability, can improve learners' vocabulary and communication skills.

3. Teachers at Zuha Hadid Intermediate School apply eco-linguistic strategies to engage students, enhance comprehension, and promote discussion in English.

1.5 Limits of the Study

The research is restricted to the teaching of English in the form of environmental subjects in the intermediate school classes. It targets learners in Zuha Hadid Intermediate School, that is, 360 students in 3 classes. The study is not extended to other schools and levels of education.

1.6 Value of the Study

This study offers recommendations to both teachers and students on how they can use environmental material to learn English better. It emphasizes the methods of teaching vocabulary, grammar and communication skills using ecological issues. It also enhances environmental consciousness and critical thinking among the intermediate learners. The study has shown that eco-linguistics improves language competence and social responsibility.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Definition of Eco-Linguistics

Eco-linguistics is a discipline that examines the way language influences human interaction with nature. It examines the effects of words and expressions on ecological attitudes and behaviors. The field was formed as a result of the connection between linguistic study and the environment. According to eco-linguistics, communication may either

promote or destroy ecological balance. It looks into the way language constructs environmental meanings and values (Haugen, 1972, P. 325).

The emergence of eco-linguistics was triggered by the observation that language systems are ecologically oriented worldviews. The scholars noted that the everyday discourse contains the cultural attitudes towards nature. Numerous words in language make environmental degradation or excessive use of resources a norm. Eco-linguistics is meant to substitute these patterns with more responsible ones (Fill, 1996, p. 20).

Eco-linguistics researches on the hidden discourses that shape the way individuals think about nature. Such discourses influence beliefs, behaviors and environmental consciousness. The destructive discourses tend to depict nature as a commodity or resource. Eco-linguists reveal such trends and propose environmentally friendly alternatives. They promote the critical analysis of environmental language among learners. This expands the knowledge about the influence of communication on ecological thinking (Stibbe, 2015, P. 8).

One of the concepts in eco-linguistics is the difference between harmful and constructive discourses. Destructive discourses propagate attitudes that are destructive to ecosystems. They are found in adverts, political speeches and media messages. Positive discourses promote care, respect and environmental responsibility. Eco-linguists strive to reinforce these positive modes of communication. They aim to transform environmental attitudes with the help of language (Stibbe, 2021, P. 12).

Eco-linguistics is also the study of the way language influences ecological identity and belonging. Linguistic framing helps people to realize their place in the environment. Harmful behaviors are normalized when language divides humans and nature. The responsibility is enhanced when language connects humans to the ecosystems. This demonstrates that environmental ethics are influenced by communication. Eco-linguistics promotes language that brings about ecological affiliation (Abram, 1996, P. 45).

Eco-linguistic analysis focuses on cultural narratives since they shape ecological imagination. Stories determine the way societies perceive nature and human accountability. There are those stories that sustainability is justified and those that justify exploitation. Eco-linguists examine these stories to find environmental ethical options. This transforms cultural perceptions of environmental problems. It links language and environmental values and practices (Buell, 2001, P. 87).

Eco-linguistics has expanded in the educational field where educators incorporate ecological information in language acquisition. The vocabulary, critical thinking, and ethical awareness are developed with the help of environmental topics. When the language lessons are related to the real-life problems, students become more engaged. This strategy builds the

linguistic competence and environmental accountability. It equips students to appreciate the issues affecting the environment in the world. Eco-linguistics thus has a positive role to play in contemporary pedagogy (Alexander and Stibbe, 2014, P. 76).

2.2 Environmental Education in Language Classrooms

Language classrooms can teach students about ecological concerns through environmental education that is meaningful. It makes learners aware of the problems facing the world such as pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity. The combination of these subjects enhances the growth of language and the sustainability of the environment. Students acquire new environmental-related vocabulary. They also become conscious of the ecological issues in the real world. This strategy promotes sustainability and educational objectives (UNESCO, 1977, P. 12).

Environmental education encourages experiential learning, which assists students to relate language with real life. By talking about environmental problems, learners are engaged in real communication. This enhances speaking, listening and critical thinking. It also renders lessons more interesting and life-related. This kind of integration makes language learning an environmental awareness tool. It develops competence and consciousness (Tilbury, 1995, P. 202).

Teachers are also important in choosing the right environmental themes to be used in the classroom. Their decisions determine the way students see ecological problems and obligations. Recycling, water conservation and wildlife protection are some of the topics that can be discussed thoughtfully. Such themes encourage learners to give opinions in English. They also make the students suggest solutions to environmental issues. This enhances language proficiency by intentional content (Palmer, 1998, P. 45).

Environmental education creates a stewardship among the learners. Students who are taught about nature in a language course associate individual accountability with language. This relationship improves ethical and environmental thinking. It also develops sympathy with nature. Promoting environmental friendliness among students helps in promoting sustainability. The inclusion of these values leads to the ecological consciousness in the long run (Sterling, 2001, P. 67).

The use of environmental topics in language classrooms assists students to develop critical views. Students examine the discourse of nature and environmental issues in the society. This discussion creates consciousness of negative discourses and false information. Students are taught to recognize positive and constructive environmental discourses. These are the skills that are needed in a media influenced world. Critical practice enhances linguistic as well as ecological literacy (Orr, 1992, P. 81).

Environmental education also promotes collaborative learning. Students engage in group discussions, projects, and problem-solving tasks related to ecological issues. Working together increases motivation and communication skills. Collaboration helps students explore different environmental viewpoints. It also encourages respectful debate and shared responsibility. Such teamwork enhances both language proficiency and environmental cooperation. Classroom collaboration builds community-centered learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, P. 27).

Moreover, integrating environmental content in language classes encourages interdisciplinary thinking. Students connect scientific, geographical, and linguistic knowledge. This makes learning more holistic and meaningful. Interdisciplinary lessons also help students understand the complexity of environmental issues. They see how language shapes scientific and social interpretations. This approach deepens academic engagement and ecological understanding. It supports broader intellectual development (Gough, 1999, P. 18).

2.3 Language Learning through Content (Content-Based Instruction – CBI)

Content-Based Instruction (CBI) is a language-teaching method that combines the subject matter with the language learning. Learners learn English through exposure to meaningful material as opposed to isolated grammar exercises. This renders the process of language learning more natural and contextual. CBI can do well with environmental issues as they are topical and inspiring. Students acquire language and cognitive abilities at the same time. This makes the learning process effective and meaningful (Brinton, Snow, and Wesche, 1989, P. 5).

CBI assists students to acquire language structures in real life situations. Learners do not memorize grammar rules, but they are exposed to them in a context of meaningful discussions. This enhances learning and memory. Students are bound to use vocabulary, tenses, and phrases when talking about environmental problems. This renders the learning of language more functional and communicative. CBI promotes the practical application of English in the classroom (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, P. 204).

The content-based learning promotes critical thinking among students in complex subjects. There are environmental problems like pollution or climate change that have to be analyzed and interpreted. This challenges the learners to articulate concepts in English. Students develop fluency and confidence as they say solutions or opinions. Language development is involved in critical thinking. CBI encourages intellectual and linguistic development (Anderson, 1990, P. 11).

CBI enhances the motivation of students by relating language to the real-life issues. Students believe that English is a means of learning

significant things. Lessons are applicable to the lives and communities of students because of environmental themes. Students will be more interested in the subject and will participate better. Motivation improves the vocabulary acquisition and communicative performance. This emphasizes the importance of language instruction that is rich in content (Stoller, 2004, P. 45).

The second strength of CBI is the fact that the four language skills are naturally integrated. The understanding and analytical skills are reinforced by reading about environmental issues. Speaking activities promote conversation and sharing of views. Writing exercises facilitate systematic thinking about ecological issues(Snow, 2010, p. 153).

CBI facilitates more vocabulary learning by repetition. Lessons have specialized terms that are used in environmental topics. The learners come across words in various contexts, which strengthens the knowledge. This forms better long term memory of vocabulary. Critical thinking and problem-solving are improved with the help of ecological content. Students examine issues of the environment and offer solutions. This involves the analysis of evidence, comparison of ideas and coherent arguments. English is acquired in the process of critical thinking about significant matters. Students train to justify and explain opinions in English. Critical interaction enhances cognitive and language growth (Richards, 2006, P. 54).

Environmental themes promote the use of direct, collaborative communication and teamwork. Pairs or groups of learners debate issues, exchanging ideas and opinions. Collaborative work fosters negotiation, turn-taking, and clarification strategies. The method also enables peer learning, where peers learn from different perspectives. These interactive settings improve fluency in English. Through social interaction, language acquisition becomes valuable (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, P. 32).

Environmental content facilitates intercultural and global awareness in teaching. Students examine issues that affect various nations and cultures. They come to understand different viewpoints on environmental responsibility. This expands cultural knowledge while practicing communication. Being global inspires empathy and social responsibility in the learners. Integrating language and environmental education results in well-rounded development (Byram, 1997, P. 45).

2.5 Eco-Friendly Classroom Activities for Intermediate Learners

Taking eco-friendly things into account makes language learning interactive and real. Students are involved in some sort of new recycling work, making posters, or taking environmental surveys. These activities bring English skills to life in a truly ecologically responsible way. Learning vocabulary and communication skills are built by dealing with real-world

problems. Involvement enhances the motivation and interest. Sustainable tasks associate learning with realistic use (Harmer, 2007, P. 112).

Activities for discussion also enhance both speaking and critical thinking. Students argue over issues like a potential debate over such topics as climate change, deforestation, or plastic pollution. The youth voice opinions, inquire, question and explain problems and solve them in English. Thus fluency can even improve, self-confidence also increases, and argumentation ability grows. Dialogue also helps to establish and listen properly to peers in particular. Language learning becomes mutually dynamic through dialogue (Ur, 1996, P. 121).

Project-based learning promotes autonomy and problem-solving. Students work in groups to research environmental challenges, and present solutions, they said. They share the results in posters, reports or digital presentations. Projects combine reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Learners are also responsible for learning outcomes. Such activities produce authentic, lived engagements with language (Thomas, 2000, P. 1).

But, environmental vocabulary games are effective for both retention and engagement. Matching, role-playing and word puzzles all introduce ecological terms. Games let learning become interactive and memorable. They also promote collaboration and peer support. Language learners learn language in a fun and motivating situation. Games promote understanding and active involvement (Nation, 2001, P. 130).

These listening activities introduce learners to real world environmental discourse. Some students tune into videos or listen to podcasts, or follow environmental news in English. Listening is also providing a model for natural language uses. Students can talk about and summarize information to practice productive skills. Listening is essential to overall language competence (Vandergrift, 2007, P. 88).

Role-play activities help students immerse themselves in real-world environmental scenarios. For instance, students can practice acting as an environmental cop, journalist, or community member. They use English to bargain with you to help them, to solve problems and to persuade you. Role-play builds communication, creativity and self-assurance. It also promotes thinking critically about ecological concerns. Simulations make the learning process realistic and real time (Ladousse, 1987, P. 5).

Writing assignments help develop expressive and analytical skills. Students write letters to local authorities, articles or blog posts about the environmental difficulties that the area is currently grappling with. They learn sentence constructions and argue directly in English. Writing also reinforces vocabulary and grammar in context. The accuracy and fluency improve with peer feedback and teacher support. These activities have a

proper application of linguistics and environmental learning, including language and the environment (Harmer, 2007, P. 98).

Eco-friendly classroom fun helps to develop social responsibility in the classroom as a part of an Environmentally Sustainable curriculum. Environmental tasks are tackled jointly or in pairs/groups; pupils use partners or groups to accomplish environmental tasks. Working with others improves communication, negotiation, and teamwork ability. Working together on a task also helps students develop empathy and respect for an environment. Students foster a feeling of collective responsibility for ecological issues. Combining activity with environmental education promotes all round learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, P. 41).

2.6 Challenges and Limitations of Eco-Linguistic Approaches in EFL Contexts

There are certain challenges of Eco-Linguistic approach, which are the following:

1.The main problem with the eco-linguistic approach lies in a lack of effective tools, especially suitable teaching material. Many textbooks have no environmental topics or specialized vocabulary. Lesson planning may be limited as students do not have access to authentic materials. Abstract concepts related to ecology may be challenging for students to grapple with.

2. According to Coyle, Hood, & Marsh (2010, P. 35), this limitation can diminish the efficacy of eco-linguistic teaching. Another limitation of eco-linguistic approaches lies in teacher preparedness. Environmental education does not always have dedicated training for EFL teachers. Their lack of knowledge may affect their confidence in teaching ecological subjects. Content integration with language objectives may be tough for teachers. But this is the barrier that needs professional development to overcome. If this is left without training, eco-linguistic lessons risk being shallow (Stibbe, 2015, P. 22).

3. Student proficiency in language could limit engagement in eco-linguistic activities. Environmental vocabulary could be complicated for intermediate learners. Communicating thought and opinion in English about the ecosystems can be difficult (Nation, 2001, P. 134).

4.Time constraints can limit the implementation of eco-linguistic lessons. Integrating ecological subjects may demand longer periods for talk, projects or activities. Standard curriculum does not leave enough time for content-based instruction. For example, teachers may focus more on preparing during an exam than on eco-linguistic tasks (Stoller, 2004, p. 48).

5. Cultural differences pose challenges to the eco-linguistic education. Different students may have differing knowledge and reactions to issues

concerning the environment. Things that can be considered might be cultural-sensitive or controversial (Byram, 1997, P. 52).

6. In EFL classroom contexts, few or no technological solutions exist that can facilitate eco-linguistic practices. Multimedia resources (videos, podcasts, interactive tools) facilitate learning. Insufficient access to technology limits opportunities for authentic listening and research tasks. Real-world environmental discourse is therefore excluded from this exposure. Teachers might need different low-tech activities. This requires infrastructure and resources for effective implementation (Vandergrift, 2007, P. 90).

3. Research Methodology and Findings

3.1 Research Methodology

Using descriptive and analytical methodology, this study examines how eco-linguistics is being incorporated in intermediate English classrooms. The study focuses on teachers' strategies, students' engagement, and the use of environmental topics as ways to nurture language development. Quantitative and qualitative data are used to ensure accuracy. The data were collected through questionnaires and classroom observations. This method enables a well-rounded perspective of instructional pedagogy and students' learning outcomes. The study examines intermediate school learners at Zahra Hadid Intermediate School.

3.2 Research Design

The present study is based on a mixed-method design. Quantitative data was gathered through surveys administered to students about engagement, vocabulary acquisition, and comprehension. Data were qualitative through teacher interviews and classroom observations. With both sources of data, it triangulates them for richer insights. The design also focuses on using eco-linguistic activities such as discussions, projects, and multimedia use. It assesses the impact of teaching environmental topics to improve English skills. This design facilitates an in-depth understanding of classroom dynamics (Johnson & Christensen, 2017).

3.3 Data Selection and Description

The participants are (360) intermediate school students in (3) classes at Zuha Hadid Intermediate School. Classes A, B, and C include (120) students each. Participants (the students participating in the survey) were chosen to reflect all levels of learning and interests. Teachers were chosen based on experience in teaching environmental topics in English. During 4 weeks of classroom sessions, data was collected. Emphasis was placed on vocabulary acquisition, participation in discussions, and comprehension of environmental topics.

Table 1: Student Distribution by Class

Class	Number of Students
A	120
B	120
C	120
Total:	360

3.4 Model of Analysis

The research uses a content-based analysis model. Classroom interactions, lesson plans, and student responses are analyzed to measure engagement. The model assesses:
1. Frequency of eco-linguistic activities used by teachers.
2. Students' participation in discussions and projects.
3. Vocabulary acquisition and comprehension improvement.

Data from surveys and observations are coded and categorized. Tables and charts are used to visualize patterns. The model ensures both linguistic and ecological learning outcomes are evaluated.

3.5 Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected through questionnaires, observation checklists, and teacher interviews. Teachers reported the types of environmental topics used, including pollution, climate change, and recycling. Students completed surveys rating their engagement, understanding, and interest in lessons. Classroom observations recorded the frequency of activities, student participation, and interaction in English. The data were tabulated and analyzed to identify patterns.

Table 2: Frequency of Eco-Linguistic Activities Used by Teachers

Activity Type	Number of Class Using	Percentage
Discussions	3	100%
Projects	3	100%
Multimedia	2	66.7 %
Vocabulary Games	2	100%
Role-plays		66.7%

Table 3: Student Engagement Levels by Class

Class	High	Medium	Low
A	80	30	10
B	75	35	10
C	78	32	10
Total:	233	97	30

3.6 Results

This study finds out the followimg:

1. Most students (233 out of 360) demonstrated high engagement during eco-linguistic activities. They actively participated in discussions and projects.

2. Vocabulary acquisition improved significantly; students used terms like "sustainability," "recycling," and "biodiversity" in their responses.

3. Teachers consistently applied discussions and projects across all classes, making them the most frequent activities.

4. Multimedia resources were used in 2 out of 3 classes, enhancing comprehension through videos and slides.

5. Role-playing activities were used less frequently (in 2 classes), but they were highly effective for promoting interaction.

6. Vocabulary games reinforced retention; students reported they found games fun and helpful for learning new terms.

7. Students showed better reading comprehension of environmental texts compared to traditional lessons.

8. Teacher interviews indicated that eco-linguistic methods increased students' motivation and encouraged critical thinking.

9. Challenges observed included time constraints and limited resources for multimedia activities.

10. Furthermore, the results confirm that teaching English through environmental topics effectively improves language skills and ecological awareness among intermediate learners.

Conclusion

To sum up, this study proves that teaching English by way of environmental topics is not just about language acquisition, but also about ecological consciousness. The report illustrated that participation in eco-linguistic activities (discussions, projects, role-plays, multimedia, and vocabulary games) supported students' motivation and engagement. Through this the students were able to practice English naturally and as they covered real world ecological matters the lessons were more interesting and current. Environmental content helped learners use vocabulary, gain improved reading comprehension and develop speaking and writing skills together. Content-language links formed an environment conducive to learning in a cognitive and language domain. Teachers were crucial in successfully applying eco-linguistic approaches. Consistent strategies such as using discussions, projects, and multimedia resulted in increased student participation and understanding, as demonstrated in this study.

Although teachers experienced some difficulties (such as lack of resources, as well as limited time available to facilitate learning), they adapted their lessons accordingly to increase learning opportunities. This

was a study that confirmed the significance of readiness and creativity among teachers in the implementation of eco-linguistic methods. Giving teachers sufficient training and resources can also supplement the efficiency of integrating environmental topic teaching and English. Additionally, eco-linguistic methodologies result in improved language development and environmental consciousness as indicated by the studies. They improved their English language skills, and their critical thinking ability, their ability to solve problems and their sense of responsibility to the environment.

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