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ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION THROUGH LANGUAGE TEACHING: EXAMINING ECO-CRITICAL DISCOURSES IN EFL TEXTBOOKS IN BANGLADESH

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Abstract
This study critically examines eco-critical discourses in EFL textbooks in Bangladesh and explores how these discourses foster environmental education. We selected secondary-level (grades 7, 8, and 9/10) EFL textbooks used in government schools. We used a qualitative descriptive design to examine selected textbook lessons. The collected data was analyzed using the reflexive thematic analysis method to identify recurring themes and patterns related to environmental discourses and representations. Analysis was guided by the framework of eco-critical language awareness and environmental literacy. Findings reveal that eco-critical discourses in the textbooks meaningfully construct environmental literacy. The textbooks present local sustainable issues in Bangladesh. By presenting eco-critical discourses, the textbooks retain ecopedagogical potential to stimulate the ecoconsciousness of learners. However, at the macro level, the textbooks conceal the socio-political and economic backing of the environmental issues. In this regard, the findings suggest that EFL curriculum designers and policymakers should integrate critically enhanced eco-critical knowledge that can explicitly foreground ecopedagogical orientations to promote environmental education while sustaining nature's intrinsic value. The study suggests how teacher educators, textbook writers, and teachers can move beyond the treatment of environmental issues as peripheral topics towards their meaningful incorporation into language teaching and learning.

Keywords: Bangladesh, eco-CLA, EFL textbooks, environmental literacy

Introduction

Bangladesh is enlisted among the environmentally-affected countries in the world due to its topography and location of river-delta. Rise in sea level, frequent cyclones, and monsoon rainfalls adversely affect the ecosystem of Bangladesh (Freihardt, 2024). High rainfalls boost the flow in river that results in extensive floods and erosion of riverbank (Hasan et al., 2018; Islam et al., 2021). Such coastal

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erosions are one of the reasons for Bangladesh's yearly economic deterioration (Ahmed, 2015). Knowing the risks of erosion in riverbanks, the local communities prefer to settle near the rivers due to high fertility ratio of farms and lack of the appropriate places during high population rate in the country (Freihardt, 2024). Bangladesh is constituent of 64 districts. Among them, almost 20 districts suffer from the riverbank erosions every year (Alam, 2017). As a consequence, floods affect around 2.5 million Indigenous people (Kaiser, 2023), and negatively impact farming lands, homes, schools and hospitals. In 2024, these floods largely impacted the livelihood of around 5.7 million people (Aishi & Fahim, 2024). Together, these environmental problems negatively impact the livelihood of common people in Bangladesh. Addressing these problems requires collaborative efforts across sectors and disciplines, and English Language Teaching (ELT) is no exception (Saiful, 2024).

ELT has long been recognized for its potential to engage with sustainability issues since 1984 (Saiful, 2024), specifically in responding to environmental crises (Mercer et al., 2023). This field can move beyond its traditional emphasis on developing students' English proficiency to fostering ecological thinking (Xiong, 2014). One way to support ecological thinking is by integrating environmental issues into English teaching materials, such as textbooks.

Textbooks are not ideologically neutral. They are cultural products that reflect and reproduce dominant values, including assumptions about human-nature relationship (Shah et al., 2025). Basya and Maulidia (2024) further argue that textbooks shape students' environmental awareness and understanding through the combination of textual and visual elements. Explanatory passages and narratives address environmental issues, while images, illustrations, and diagrams support the text and highlight key ideas, thereby facilitating comprehension and awareness, and transmitting environmental ideologies, knowledge, and awareness (Lee & Feng, 2026). Previous scholarship has shown that ELT textbooks frequently include environmental themes to develop students' ecological awareness (Davari et al., 2025; Xiong, 2014). Beyond raising awareness, such integration can also strengthen students' connection to nature (Saiful & Shein, 2025) and foster ecological worldviews (Saiful, 2025b) and nature empathy (Saiful & Yunianti, 2025).

Concerning ecological issues in Bangladesh, it is pivotal to examine the extent to which EFL textbooks in Bangladesh contribute to fostering environmental education. This line of research is critical, because it reveals the discourses used to develop students' environmental knowledge, awareness, and worldviews. Through the analysis, English teachers and material developers in Bangladesh can gain concrete references for selecting and reproducing pro-environmental narratives in classroom. Beyond its importance, research on eco-critical discourses in EFL textbooks within the Bangladeshi context remains limited (see Islam, 2021; Saraf, 2025). These studies focus on textbooks and students' perceptions of environmental awareness in English lessons. They present a limited view of environmental discourses and the students' interpretation.

This knowledge gap may lead to a limited understanding of environmental issues, particularly in vulnerable contexts such as Bangladesh, which suffers from acute ecological challenges. Environmental problems may be presented as neutral or purely technical matters, which obscure their structural causes and weaken students' critical environmental literacy. This omission also conceals

environmental injustice, especially in settings where marginalized communities are most affected. As a result, ELT may raise eco-critical awareness but without enabling students to critically examine policies, power relations, or responsibility, it limits its role in fostering active and informed ecological citizenship.

Existing scholarship on eco-critical discourses in EFL/ELT textbooks

ELT textbooks construct ideologies and behaviours of learners (Babaii & Sheikhi, 2018; Copley, 2018; Qazi, 2020). Researchers in global and Bangladeshi context have critically examined EFL/ELT textbooks to explore the ecological representations (see e.g., Amalsaleh et al., 2010; Kapranov, 2022; Shah et al., 2025; Tatin et al., 2024; Xerri et al., 2026). The studies show that textbooks normalize anthropocentric worldview of nature, neglecting the intrinsic value of nature. In Bangladesh, ELT textbooks diverge and fail to foster environmental education by retaining limited knowledge about ecological issues (see Islam, 2021; Saraf, 2025). Iqbal and Lohar (2022) have studied that ELT textbooks in Pakistan retain human-centred green content, and school system and teaching approaches are also not compatible to inculcate environmental education in many parts of the world (see Liondos, 2022; Majeed et al., 2022). In this sense, the textbooks fail at Education for Sustainable Development and provide a narrow view of environmental discourses in countries, such as Brazil (Cristovão et al., 2022) and China (Xiong, 2014). However, Vietnamese ELT textbooks retain environmental literacy, but factors such as capitalism and political policies contributing to climate destruction remain overlooked (Lee & Nguyen, 2024). EFL/ELT textbooks fail to present eco-critical discourses, explicitly fostering environmental literacy. Conclusively, eco-critical discourses in the textbooks are based on human-centric approach, neoliberalization of nature and serve moderate level of environmental education (see e.g., Ekasiwi & Bram, 2023; Hamed, 2021; Triyono et al., 2023; Zahoor & Janjua, 2020).

In contrast, a few researchers have studied that EFL/ELT textbooks have potential for critical environmental education. For example, a study on ELT textbooks in Morocco by Mliless et al. (2024) reveals that the textbooks serve environmental literacy. Such eco-critical approach to language textbooks can ameliorate sustainability education in academia around the world. For instance, ELT textbooks in China help spread eco-critical awareness among learners (Ma, 2024). Iran's recently designed ELT textbooks also enhance ecological responsibility, ecoconsciousness and eco-critical skills (Davari et al., 2025).

Existing scholarship critically contributes to understand environmental language education. It informs that language textbooks are anthropocentric and contain human-centred environmental knowledge. To this end, this study aims to examine eco-critical discourses in EFL textbooks in Bangladesh, especially how the undertaken textbooks place the environmental problems at the centre to enhance the ecoconsciousness of language learners, making sustainability a common practice in teaching and learning. The study explores how eco-critical discourses in the EFL textbooks in Bangladesh manifest sustainability, contextualizing local knowledge of rivers, animals and plants that could enhance ecoconsciousness of learners. For this, the study has employed the concepts of eco-critical language awareness (eco-CLA henceforth) given by Micalay-Hurtado and Poole (2022) and environmental literacy (EL henceforth) (Roth, 1992) as a framework. The study

addresses the following research question: How do eco-critical discourses in EFL textbooks in Bangladesh foster environmental education?

Theoretical framework

We have critically employed eco-critical language awareness (eco-CLA) and environmental literacy (EL) to analyze eco-critical discourses in the selected EFL textbooks. Eco-CLA focuses on teaching language alongside eco-critical awareness. By making sustainability a common practice, it brings localized sustainable knowledge in ELT. In this study, the undertaken ELT textbooks also manifest eco-centric discourses designed in local sustainable context of Bangladesh and make sustainability a common practice in education. Similarly, the objective of EL is to develop environment-friendly behaviour among individuals. The textbooks also foster behaviour, affect and action components of EL. We have, therefore, employed the concepts of eco-CLA and EL as a framework to critically analyze how the textbooks provide both eco-critical awareness and environmental literacy as environmental education.

Eco-CLA (Micalay-Hurtado & Poole, 2022) is based on two concepts: critical language awareness (CLA) by Fairclough (2001) and ecolinguistics by Stibbe (2014). CLA argues "values of social justice" (Crookes, 2021, p.47) are at the centre, approaching inclusiveness of discussions on the values of power dynamics in language (Achugar, 2015, p.1) to manifest challenging approaches to the ways a language determines power relations (Fairclough, 2001, p.193). Ecolinguistics further expands "the role of language in the life-sustaining interactions of humans, other species and the physical environment" (Stibbe, 2021, p.223). It determines human perceptions of learning about the environment/nature through language teaching (Stibbe, 2014). Moreover, critical understanding and actions, and eco-activism are interlinked (Janks, 2020). Therefore, eco-CLA aims to teach about environmental issues. The framework combines five principles that can be utilized to analyze the environment, nature, and human/non-human relation in language teaching (Micalay-Hurtado & Poole, 2022).

Posthumanism as a philosophical concept determines the first principle of eco-CLA. Posthumanism states that *"humans are no longer set apart from the world - distinct, inalienable creatures who control the environment – but [are] part of it, interwoven into the fabric of things"* (Pennycook, 2018, p.129). The first principle of the framework illustrates that eco-CLA in language education creates awareness for learners about interaction between humans and non-humans. It brings nature in knowledge making process that instils integrated approach to humans and non-humans. It also assists in identifying and countering the dominant perspectives that ignore human-non-human relation (Micalay-Hurtado & Poole, 2022). The second principle of eco-CLA insists to make sustainability and well-being a common practice in language education. According to Stibbe (2021), school system constructs a spiral of beliefs in a particular society. They promote unsustainable ways cultures retain. Therefore, unsustainable "stories-we-live-by" are also upheld by students' belief cycle. Hence, school education should shift its focus to sustainable practices that foster environmental education and make these practices common sense. In this regard, if sustainability education becomes a common practice in education, students may identify and counter the destructively dominant anti-nature discourses (Micalay-Hurtado & Poole, 2022).

The development of ecoconsciousness serves as the third and important principle of eco-CLA. It emphasizes to fetch local sustainable issues in the classroom to make students interact with localized knowledge. To develop students' interest and excitement for environmental education, their consent can be obtained by making them realize about environmental catastrophes their region, and community suffer from (Micalay-Hurtado & Poole, 2022). Moreover, the fourth principle of the framework advocates for learners who come from the areas affected by natural disasters. Thus, such students can be taught about climate change emergency so that they can advocate the ecological problems faced by their communities (Micalay-Hurtado & Poole, 2022). Moreover, eco-CLA ultimately focuses on pedagogical strategies for environmental education through language teaching. Therefore, we have aligned eco-CLA with the concept of environmental literacy to enhance our findings in a critical way.

The concept of environmental literacy (EL) was given by a prominent scholar Roth (1992). EL functions to bring attention towards the environment and fosters climate action to preserve nature effectively. UNESCO-UNEP (1990) portrays EL as a goal of EE to inculcate eco-critical awareness, ecological sympathy and eco-friendly behaviour. Roth's (1992) proposed three elements of EL: (1) knowledge, (2) affect and (3) behaviour. These elements are fundamentally considered essential components of EL (Hollweg et al., 2011). Similarly, Fang (2020) suggests that EL can be comprised into three elements as knowledge, affect, and behaviour.

In this study, we have employed three interrelated components of EL as suggested by Fang (2020): knowledge, affect, and behaviour (Roth, 1992). Environmental 'knowledge' focuses on understanding environmental issues (e.g., floods and pollution), their origin, and impacts (Roth, 1992). It includes identifying, examining, evaluating and analysing environmental issues while stimulating upon socio-political factors and ecological insights (Fang, 2020). The component of 'affect' aims at nurturing sympathy towards nature/environment to enhance ecoconsciousness and eco-sensitivity among individuals (Roth, 1992). 'Affect' enables individuals to engage with environmental issues through an empathetic orientation towards the natural world. It therefore emphasizes the human-nature relationship and values, and attitudes towards environmental well-being (Fang, 2020). Moreover, Roth (1992) asserts that 'behaviour' adheres to environment-friendly attitude in the cognitive process of an individual. It considers individual accountability for climate action that promotes environmental conservation. According to Fang (2020), this component consists of five sub-parts: (1) eco-management (e.g., recycle, and energy preservation), (2) economic initiatives (e.g., financial donations for eco-strategies), (3) persuasion of individuals to address climate emergency, (4) participation in eco-politics (e.g., advocacy for upgrading eco-laws) and (5) taking legal actions (e.g., to report the violation to the concerned authorities).

In this study, the framework of eco-CLA and EL has been employed as an analytical lens to examine the lessons, activities, and textual representations in the selected textbooks. Relevant textual excerpts are identified and coded according to analytical categories based on the framework. The first four eco-CLA principles, posthumanism, sustainability and well-being, ecoconsciousness, and ecological advocacy, are used as analytical categories to identify critical and ecological dimensions of the eco-representations. The three EL components, knowledge,

affect, and behaviour, are used as analytical categories to determine whether and how eco-representations engage with environmental knowledge, affect, and behaviour. The coded data and categories are compared to identify recurring patterns. These patterns have helped generate themes interpreted in light of the framework.

Method

This study was conducted to critically analyze how EFL textbooks in Bangladesh foster environmental education through eco-critical discourses. We did not collect data from humans to gauge the impact of the textbooks in teaching/learning process in the classroom. The textbooks are considered an eminent part of teaching material in English language classrooms (Lee & Nguyen, 2024; Shah et al., 2025), thus becoming worth exploration. During the sampling of textbooks, pre-screening was conducted to evaluate various EFL textbooks taught at secondary-level schools in Bangladesh. Only closely relevant three textbooks that contained eco-critical discourses were selected. The selection of these textbooks was in line with the fact that the textbooks at the secondary-level education play a vital role in developing cognitive skills and opinion formation of the learners (Mahboob, 2017). Thus, it is substantial to critically examine these textbooks to highlight their role in developing/erasing students' sense of ecological responsibility.

The aim of this study was to explore if the selected EFL textbooks contained eco-critical discourses. If so, how far do the discourses foster environmental education? We critically examined how eco-critical discourses are localized in Bangladeshi context, considering sustainability as a common practice to develop ecoconsciousness through language education. The undertaken textbooks are titled *English for Today: Class Seven, English for Today: Class Eight,* and *English for Today: Class IX & X*. There are three textbooks, because the ninth/tenth grade has one textbook, taught in two sessions. Since the Grade 6 textbook does not contain any lesson on climate change or eco-criticality, it is not included in this study. The undertaken textbooks are prescribed and published by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board, Dhaka, Bangladesh. The textbooks are revised for 2025 by the publisher. All the states/provinces in Bangladesh follow these textbooks for respective grades. The textbooks are available online and can easily be accessed.

We employed a qualitative descriptive design to examine the undertaken English language textbook lessons, because qualitative methods provide rich insights (Creswell, 2013) to address research questions in a broader way. The data was analyzed manually using the reflexive thematic analysis (RTA henceforth) method (Braun & Clarke, 2019) to identify recurring themes and patterns related to environmental discourses and representations. RTA involves the researcher's intellectual and critical approach to reflect on the collected dataset to generate themes. In this study, the first author reflected and generated the themes, as Braun and Clarke (2019) discourage more than one author from being involved in RTA coding due to mixture and repetition of themes. We reflexively generated themes from the textbooks. The themes were further divided into sub-themes for analysis, following analytical categories of the framework. The third author as being part of the same educational system in Bangladesh helped analyze data. The initial stage

was followed by the second author, and the first author cross-checked, reviewed, and suggested changes to avoid any misleading approach. The mutual themes from each textbook were placed together in conjunction. Eco-CLA and EL served as a framework to interpret and analyze findings. Findings were compared and contrasted with existing knowledge on eco-critical discourses in English language textbooks to synthesize the results of this study in a wide range of context.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

This section presents the findings divided into three major themes. They are compared and contrasted with existing knowledge in the discussion.

Eco-critical awareness and literacy

EFL textbooks in Bangladesh bring about environmental knowledge for students' understanding of climate change. This directly enacts the 'knowledge' dimension of environmental literacy (Roth, 1992), which requires identifying, examining, and evaluating environmental issues within socio-ecological contexts**.** A lesson, *"Planet Earth in Crisis"* (p.99)*,* in the chapter 'Climate Change' in the Grade 7 textbook introduces students to the concept of climate change through a scientific explanation of seasonal shifts in the climatic affected world. It offers foundational knowledge of climate change and its severe effects, such as unusual seasonal shifts, rising temperatures, and other consequences. Expressions like *"danger", "climate change", "seasons are shifting",* and *"temperatures are climbing"* introduce learners to the discourse of environmental crisis. From an ecolinguistic perspective within eco-CLA, such lexical choices shape "stories-we-live-by" about environmental insecurity, and crisis (Stibbe, 2014/2021). The conversation in the lesson on seasonal shift in Bangladesh between a girl, a boy and a man named Anwar indicates basic environmental knowledge leading towards environmental literacy. The use of familiar characters like Arif and Samina in the lesson also helps personalize abstract environmental issues, fostering an emotional connection and encouraging eco-critical awareness among students. This personalization operationalizes the 'affect' component of environmental literacy by cultivating eco-sensitivity and emotional engagement with environmental degradation (Roth, 1992).

A lesson on *"Environmental Pollution"* in the Grade 9/10 textbook also presents environmental knowledge of pollution, damaging air, soil, and water, *"Bangladesh is now in the grip of all sorts of pollution"* (p.12). Both lessons significantly foster environmental literacy by presenting real-life environmental phenomena in a relatable context (e.g., early summer, no electricity, rising temperatures, pollution). This approach reflects local sustainable knowledge in Bangladeshi context. By doing so, it corresponds to the third principle of eco-CLA that foregrounds localized sustainable issues to develop ecoconsciousness through contextual relevance (Micalay-Hurtado & Poole, 2022). This real-life example of environmental phenomena is necessary in ELT textbooks to promote meaningful ecological engagement.

Another lesson, *"What Happens in Bangladesh?"* in the textbook of the same grade demonstrates a clear and focused engagement with environmental literacy while contextualizing climate change within Bangladesh's Indigenous socio-

ecological landscape. The text describes a range of local environmental issues known as prolonged droughts, irregular monsoons, frequent floods, river erosion, landslides, water salinity, and crop damage. This approach reflects not only environmental knowledge but also connects learners to their local community. It enacts the second principle of eco-CLA, which insists that sustainability and well-being should be normalized as a common practice in ELT (Micalay-Hurtado & Poole, 2022)**.** The reference to concrete historical events, such as the *2009 cyclone Aila*, and the *45-centimetre sea-level rise* potentially displacing 5.5 million people in Bangladesh, reflects the local sustainable issues of the region, and strengthens the impact of text for ecoconsciousness of learners. Such contextualization also aligns with eco-CLA's fourth principle, advocating pedagogical engagement for learners situated in disaster-affected regions (Micalay-Hurtado & Poole, 2022). It effectively informs learners about the severity and immediacy of climate change, thus deepening the eco-critical awareness, and environmental literacy.

Moreover, lesson 1, *"The Greed of the Mighty Rivers"* in the unit 'Climate Change' of the Grade 9/10 textbook, reads a story on the flood effects caused by local rivers in Bangladesh. The story presents a character Maherejan who loses her home family, happiness, land, and property due to riverbank erosions, *"The erosion of the Jamuna gradually consumed all her land property"* (p.9). Such stories in EFL textbooks demonstrate local sustainability issues of Bangladesh. It reflects eco-critical language awareness that determines the ecoconsciousness of learners by making sustainability as a common practice in language education (Micalay-Hurtado & Poole, 2022). Through the lens of CLA (Fairclough, 2001), this narrative constructs subjective positions of vulnerability shaped by environmental forces, thereby revealing how language mediates power relations between human communities and ecological processes (Micalay-Hurtado & Poole, 2022). Bangladesh has been facing severe rain fall during monsoon that disturbs the socio-economic fabric of common people's lives, and the lesson also presents the same Indigenous problems as it reads *"Bangladesh is a land of rivers, some of whose banks overflow or erode during monsoon"* (p.9). When students read such stories they may develop their sense of environmental knowledge that expands identification and analysis of environmental issues. By presenting such eco-critical discourses, EFL textbooks in Bangladesh build eco-critical awareness for environmental literacy.

Relationship between humans and non-humans

In lesson 1, "*The Little Bird"* (p.44-46) of the Grade 8 textbook, a short story by Leo Tolstoy demonstrates the relationship between humans and non-humans. The story is about Seryozha and siskin, a bird. The boy cages the bird, because he likes it, but eventually he forgets to feed the bird. It gets sick. When the bird escapes to fly from the cage, it hits a glass and dies, "*When Seryozha went up to the cage next morning, he saw the siskin lying on its back with its legs curled up. It was dead."* (p.46). This story reflects the human actions that negatively destroy the life of the bird as a non-human entity. It corresponds with eco-CLA's first principle grounded in posthumanism that conceptualizes humans as interwoven within, rather than dominant over ecological landscape (Micalay-Hurtado & Poole, 2022). The lesson implies to instil nature-sympathy among the learners as it brings eco-sensitivity by depicting the death of the bird, *"Never again did Seryozha catch another bird"*

(p.46). The lesson inculcates realization, which reflects the 'affect' component of environmental literacy by cultivating empathetic reorientation towards non-human life (Roth, 1992). Though this approach does not bring local sustainable issues of Bangladesh, it effectively draws on environmental literacy by focusing on 'affect' as empathy towards nature, because the boy in the story becomes eco-sensitive and thinks to avoid catching another bird. It indoctrinates 'affect' as ecoconsciousness among learners for such stories in EFL lessons postulate eco-sympathy. When students engage with such a story, they may develop awareness of birds as an integral part of the natural environment, which in turn can create empathy and a sense of connectedness with nature.

Lesson 3, *"Man and Climate"* (p.15) in the unit "Climate Change" in matriculation EFL textbook, fosters knowledge about environmental changes caused by human activities against nature. It critiques the anthropocentric worldview of nature to effectively enhance ecoconsciousness of learners. This decentring reflects eco-CLA's posthumanist orientation that challenges human involvement in disturbing nature (Micalay-Hurtado & Poole, 2022). Though it does not bring localized knowledge of Bangladeshi context, it aims to decentre the human-centred activities, relating knowledge of environmental issues (Roth, 1992).

The lesson places climate change as a relatively recent and scientifically demonstrable issue, where the advancement of industrialization in the nineteenth century is linked to humans growing rates of fossil fuel usage and greenhouse gas emissions. By promoting awareness and offering basic scientific information on the cause of global warming, it develops learners' environmental literacy. This systematic explanation operationalizes the 'knowledge' element of environmental literacy by linking environmental change to identifiable historical and economic processes (Roth, 1992). It creates awareness by showing human actions on the planet, *"Every time a fossil raw material is burned, it releases carbon dioxide into the air"* (p.15). It informs the readers about the causes of the environmental problem, addressing them as the result of industrialization, deforestation, and dependence on fossil fuels, *"Every year enormous areas of forests are destroyed by people to obtain wood and to clear regions for mining..."* (p.15). Explicit enactment of the reality *"we humans can be held responsible"* (p.15) shows that humans are subject to accountability for environmental crises. This attribution of responsibility corresponds with the 'behaviour' dimension of environmental literacy, foregrounding accountability to climate action (Roth, 1992). This approach to EFL textbooks situates learners in the sense of accountability that beckons to think critically about human agency against nature.

Behaviour as environmental literacy

In the third lesson, *"What Can We Do?"* (p.105) in the Grade 7 textbook, a discussion represents a notable change, shifting from descriptive knowledge of environmental problems to climate action: *"you can also save energy by…"* and *"there is plenty you can do."* This discursive shift from description to action exemplifies the 'behaviour' component of environmental literacy. It promotes eco-management practices such as energy preservation, and waste reduction (Fang, 2020; Roth, 1992). It focuses on the role of individual behaviour in mitigating climate change and encourages students to adopt environmentally conscious habits, such as walking or cycling instead of using machines, using solar energy, avoiding

air conditioning, consuming less meat and dairy products, and reducing waste through recycling and reuse. It positions learners as participants for dealing with climate change through everyday life choices.

Such positioning also aligns with eco-CLA's posthumanist principle that conceptualizes humans as embedded within ecological systems rather than external bodies (Micalay-Hurtado & Poole, 2022). Expressions like *"Avoid machines as much as possible"* and *"Live sensibly"* demonstrate the anthropocentric values human life is based on. Hence, the lesson indoctrinates students about a shift towards solution-oriented discourse, encouraging them to reconfigure their behaviour and lifestyle. However, it also fosters an individualist paradigm. In this sense, the textbooks remain limited as the focus is solely placed on individual behaviour without exposing the structural or political concerns behind climate crisis.

Lesson 5, *"A Friend of the Earth",* in the unit "Climate Change" in the Grade 9/10 textbook presents a discussion titled *Let's Save Our Planet*! (p.20). It begins a discussion on recycling as a discourse of personal agency and consumer ethics. The three sources on problem (reduce, reuse and recycle) represent environmental responsibility that constructs and situates learners in the discourse of agency and consumer responsibility. This reflects eco-management within the behavioural stance of environmental literacy (Fang, 2020; Roth, 1992). The text specifically criticizes overconsumption, encouraging students to question their buying habits, and questioning *"Do I really need this?* (p.20) and *"Will this last a long time?* (p.20). This approach creates a consciousness of unsustainable consumer culture. Beyond awareness and knowledge, the lesson is delivered in the form of practical skills which students can apply in their everyday life. This practical alignment seems consequential in the way it helps students to be prepared to make a change at a personal level. This pedagogical orientation reflects eco-CLA's commitment to transforming unsustainable "stories-we-live-by" into sustainable educational practices (Micalay-Hurtado & Poole, 2022; Stibbe, 2014).

Discussion

This study aims to examine eco-critical discourses in EFL textbooks in Bangladesh, especially how EFL textbooks in Bangladesh place these environmental problems at the centre. We have presented three major themes. In relation to theme one, the findings demonstrate that EFL textbooks in Bangladesh substantially incorporate elements of eco-critical awareness and environmental literacy through the integration of localized environmental knowledge, affective engagement, and behaviour-oriented practices. Through contextualized representation of climate change, pollution, river erosion, and disaster-related experiences, the textbooks operationalize the knowledge and affect components of environmental literacy while enacting the principles of eco-CLA, particularly the normalization of sustainability and the inclusion of localized ecological realities. In this regard, the present study contrasts to (Amalsaleh et al., 2010; Iqbal & Lohar, 2022; Kapranov, 2022; Saraf, 2025; Tatin et al., 2024; Xerri et al., 2026) who argued that EFL/ELT textbooks are anthropocentric and centre environmental discourses on human feasibility of economic gains, aesthetic pleasure, and mental well-being. Our findings extend these studies by presenting that EFL textbooks in Bangladesh are eco-centric, and value nature. The textbooks promote climate change awareness, and bring localized sustainable knowledge, thereby instilling

environmental education among learners. However, this finding is aligned with Basya and Maulidia (2024) who argued that textbooks can produce environmental literacy via textual representations.

Moreover, in relation to theme two, this study argues that the portrayal of human-non-human relationship and the emphasis on individual accountability further contribute to the development of ecoconsciousness among learners. This finding contradicts the results of existing scholarship (Cristovão et al., 2022; Islam, 2021; Triyono et al., 2023). They argued that the textbooks present limited version of environmental literacy and accountability. By encouraging ecoconsciousness through the element of nature-sympathy and human actions behind ecological crisis in lesson 3 *"Man and Climate"* (p.15) of unit "Climate Change" in the matriculation EFL textbook, this finding holistically presents a new perspective on eco-critical discourses. In doing so, it extends the work of Saiful and Yunianti (2025), who found that eco-critical writing, can foster nature empathy. The present study suggests that eco-critical texts in textbooks may likewise contribute to the development of nature empathy. Drawing on this, Saiful and Shein (2025) studied that eco-critical texts can facilitate the development of students' sense of connectedness with nature. Similarly, this study presents that the undertaken EFL textbooks bring about an interwoven human-nature relationship, thus indicating ecopedagogical implications.

In relation to theme three, this study found that environmental discourses in the textbooks decentre the anthropocentric worldview of nature, which places humans at the centre. This finding contradicts previous studies (Ekasiwi & Bram, 2023; Liondos, 2022; Shah et al., 2025) that inform about the anthropocentric narratives of EFL/ELT textbooks. The present study found that EFL textbooks in Bangladesh consider environmental problems as the outcome of human actions, disturbing the natural balance. This finding extends the previous scholarship that argued that ELT textbooks have potential to sustain environmental literacy and bear ecopedagogical implication in countries such as Brazil (Cristovão et al., 2022), Iran (Davari et al., 2025), China (Ma, 2024; Xiong, 2014), Indonesia (Basya & Maulidia, 2024; Komarawan et al., 2025) and Moroco (Mliless et al., 2024). Similarly, the present study argues that textbooks may create behavioural environmental literacy among learners, and may develop their sense of individualistic responsibility towards the protection of environmental literacy, thereby retaining ecopedagogical potential to foster environmental education.

However, this finding also reveals conceptual limitations that align with the findings of Shah et al. (2025) and Zahoor and Janjua (2020). They argued that ELT textbooks are anthropocentric. Under theme two, we found that while EFL textbooks in Bangladesh encourage personal responsibility and eco-management behaviours, they sometimes tend to privilege individualist and anthropocentric framings. Structural, economic, and political dimensions of environmental crisis, which are central to both critical language awareness and environmental literacy, sometimes remain overlooked. This finding further expands the study of Lee and Nguyen (2024). They argued that socio-political factors behind environmental catastrophes are neglected in language textbooks. The similar framing in EFL textbooks in Bangladesh encourages environmental protection centred on human benefit and sustainability of resourceful items, rather than natural ecological essence. In addition, individualistic agenda comes before structural causes, such as

industrial production, corporate pollution, and government's failures. Thus, the behavioural framing remains partial, insisting on individualized responsibility while avoiding collective eco-political agency necessary for critical environmental education.

Conclusion

This study, through qualitative reflexive thematic analysis method, explored how eco-critical discourses in EFL textbooks in Bangladesh foster environmental education. Results demonstrate that the textbooks reflect an emergent version of environmental education and connect environmental problems to Bangladesh's real life climate change crises, build literacy, behaviour, action, and affect to consider nature as an entity, which is an integrated part of eco-system. Textbooks contain eco-centric worldview yet expose minimized political dimensions behind climate crises. They notably bring local sustainability knowledge to foster nature empathy among learners. The textbooks retain ecopedagogical implications, and if they are taught through ecopedagogical approaches, they can be connected to learners' understanding of local environmental problems of Bangladesh. In doing so, these textbooks may be utilized to cultivate ecological awareness and responsibility through language education. In contrast to the ecopedagogical positioning of the lessons, the textbooks sometimes tend to neglect systematic critique disclosing real culprits behind the climate change emergency.

The study has limitations in many respects. First, it focuses exclusively on textual analysis of selected EFL textbooks and does not investigate how teachers and students interpret, negotiate, or enact these eco-critical discourses in classroom practice. Future studies may extend this research to involve empirical classroom-based research to examine how eco-critical textbook content is mediated through teaching practices, and how students respond to such materials. Second, the study does not include comparative analysis across different grade levels, publishers, or regional contexts, which may offer a more nuanced understanding of ecological representations. Comparative cross-national studies are also welcomed. They could explore how environmental discourses in EFL textbooks differ across Global South contexts, revealing ideological variations in ecological representations. Third, the analysis is primarily discourse-oriented and does not measure the actual impact of these materials on learners' environmental attitudes, critical literacy, or behavioural change. Longitudinal studies are welcomed to investigate whether sustained exposure to eco-critical ELT materials fosters critical environmental agency beyond individual behavioural awareness.

The findings carry crucial implications for curriculum developers, textbook writers, and teacher educators. There is a need to move beyond awareness-raising and individual behavioural change towards integrating structural, political, and justice-oriented perspectives in environmental representations. EFL materials can serve not only as sites for linguistic development but also as spaces for cultivating critical environmental literacy that interrogates power, policy, and responsibility. For teacher education, professional development programs should equip teachers with ecopedagogical strategies to facilitate deeper discussions about systemic causes of environmental crises rather than limiting instruction to moral or behavioural messaging. For policymakers, the study highlights the importance of embedding environmental justice and critical sustainability frameworks within

national curriculum design, ensuring that environmental education in EFL aligns with broader socio-ecological realities of Bangladesh and other comparable countries.

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