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A conceptual framework for integrating ecological awareness, interreligious values, and global citizenship in EFL learning

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ABSTRACT

English Language Teaching (ELT) is increasingly expected to address not only linguistic needs but also global, cultural, and ethical challenges. This article develops a conceptual framework for integrating ecological and interreligious values into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning to promote ecological awareness, intercultural competence, and global citizenship. Using an integrative literature review with a conceptual-analytical approach, the study examines research on ELT, ecological literacy, intercultural competence, global citizenship education, and interreligious ecological ethics. The analysis indicates that EFL classrooms can foster ecological literacy through reading, writing, speaking, listening, vocabulary learning, and collaborative activities. Interreligious values including care for creation, moderation, responsibility, solidarity, and respect for life can enrich EFL materials when presented as cultural and ethical resources rather than doctrinal instruction. Based on the synthesis, the article proposes a four-dimensional conceptual framework integrating linguistic, ecological, intercultural, and ethical dimensions. It concludes that embedding ecological and interreligious values into EFL materials can simultaneously strengthen language competence and prepare learners to participate responsibly in a culturally diverse and ecologically fragile world.

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INTRODUCTION

English Language Teaching (ELT) has evolved beyond its traditional focus on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and communicative competence. As English increasingly functions as a global language, it also serves as a medium through which learners encounter diverse cultures, global issues, ethical dilemmas, and multiple perspectives on contemporary social challenges. Consequently, language education is now expected not only to develop linguistic proficiency but also to cultivate learners' critical thinking, intercultural awareness, and social responsibility. Within this perspective, a global education approach to ELT positions English learning as a means of engaging students with issues such as peace, sustainability, human rights, and global citizenship while simultaneously developing communicative competence (Cates, 2022). Likewise, intercultural communicative competence emphasizes that language and culture are inseparable, requiring learners to understand and negotiate cultural meanings through meaningful communication (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993).

Among the many global challenges relevant to ELT, the ecological crisis has become one of the most urgent. Climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, unsustainable consumption, and environmental degradation are no longer viewed solely as scientific or environmental concerns but also as social, ethical, and educational issues. In response, UNESCO (2020) advocates Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which encourages educational institutions to equip learners with the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary to contribute to sustainable futures. From this perspective, EFL classrooms offer valuable opportunities to foster ecological literacy by integrating environmental issues into authentic language-learning activities such as reading, discussion, writing, and collaborative learning.

Growing scholarly attention has demonstrated the potential of integrating ecological perspectives into English language education. Jacobs and Goatly (2000) first showed that environmental themes could be meaningfully incorporated into ELT coursebooks without compromising language-learning objectives. Building on this work, Micalay-Hurtado and Poole (2022) proposed an eco-critical language awareness approach that situates language learning within broader discussions of sustainability, justice, and well-being. More recently, Achadiyah (2025) demonstrated that ecological themes can foster students' ecological critical awareness in Indonesian EFL classrooms through contextualized instructional practices. Collectively, these studies indicate a gradual shift from using environmental issues as supplementary classroom topics toward recognizing ecological literacy as a broader pedagogical orientation that enriches language learning through authentic and socially relevant content.

However, ecological literacy extends beyond developing environmental knowledge alone. Ecolinguistics perspectives suggest that language not only reflects reality but also shapes how individuals perceive, interpret, and respond to ecological issues (Stibbe, 2021). Consequently, ecological education also involves questions of values, identity, ethics, and human relationships with nature. In many societies, particularly those characterized by cultural and religious diversity such as Indonesia, these values are deeply embedded within religious and cultural traditions. Scholars have argued that ecological responsibility is closely connected with ethical principles such as stewardship, moderation, gratitude, justice, solidarity, and care for creation (Nasr, 1996; Pope Francis, 2015). These perspectives suggest that religious traditions can serve as valuable cultural resources for strengthening ecological awareness without necessarily functioning as religious instruction.

Within EFL learning, interreligious values may therefore enrich classroom discussions when they are presented as cultural and ethical perspectives that encourage dialogue rather than doctrinal teaching. Learners can, for example, compare ecological narratives from different religious or cultural traditions, discuss shared ethical principles underlying environmental responsibility, and reflect on how different communities respond to ecological challenges. Such activities provide opportunities to develop language proficiency while simultaneously fostering intercultural understanding, respect for diversity, and ethical reflection. In this way, English learning becomes a meaningful context for connecting local cultural experiences with broader global conversations about sustainability.

The integration of ecological awareness and interreligious values is also closely aligned with the objectives of Global Citizenship Education (GCE), which seeks to prepare learners to understand global challenges, appreciate cultural diversity, and participate responsibly in creating more peaceful, inclusive, and sustainable societies (UNESCO, 2015). As English functions as an international language, EFL classrooms provide an appropriate space for learners to engage with global ecological discourse while interpreting these issues through their own cultural and religious contexts. Consequently, ELT has the potential to contribute not only to communicative competence but also to the development of globally responsible and culturally responsive citizens.

Despite these developments, existing research has not yet provided a comprehensive pedagogical framework that systematically integrates ecological awareness, interreligious values, and global citizenship within EFL learning. Earlier studies primarily demonstrated the feasibility of incorporating environmental topics into language materials (Jacobs & Goatly, 2000), whereas subsequent research emphasized

eco-critical language awareness ([Micalay-Hurtado & Poole, 2022](#)) or classroom strategies for fostering ecological awareness ([Achadiyah, 2025](#)). Similarly, studies on intercultural communicative competence and Global Citizenship Education have highlighted the importance of cultural understanding, ethical responsibility, and participation in global issues ([Byram, 1997](#); [UNESCO, 2015](#)), yet these perspectives are generally discussed independently. Consequently, there remains limited theoretical guidance explaining how ecological literacy, interreligious ethical values, intercultural learning, and global citizenship can be integrated into a coherent pedagogical model for EFL learning.

Addressing this gap is particularly important because ecological education is ultimately concerned with how individuals understand their relationships with other people, cultures, and the natural world. In culturally and religiously diverse educational settings such as Indonesia, connecting ecological issues with shared ethical values can provide learners with more meaningful opportunities to reflect on environmental responsibility while appreciating diverse cultural perspectives. Such an approach positions English learning not merely as language practice but as a space where learners develop ecological awareness, intercultural sensitivity, ethical responsibility, and global citizenship simultaneously.

Responding to this need, the present study proposes a conceptual-pedagogical framework that integrates ecological awareness, interreligious values, and global citizenship into EFL learning. Drawing upon an integrative review of relevant literature, the study develops a four-dimensional framework consisting of linguistic, ecological, intercultural, and ethical dimensions. Unlike previous studies that have examined these perspectives separately, the proposed framework conceptualizes them as interconnected components of meaningful language education. In doing so, the study contributes to ELT scholarship by providing a theoretical foundation for integrating ecological literacy, intercultural communicative competence, Global Citizenship Education, and interreligious ecological ethics within EFL pedagogy. Pedagogically, it also offers guidance for teachers and material developers in designing EFL materials that are linguistically purposeful, culturally responsive, ethically reflective, and ecologically relevant. This perspective is consistent with [Tomlinson's \(2012\)](#) view that effective language-learning materials should integrate meaningful content with authentic learning experiences that support learners' linguistic, cognitive, cultural, and social development.

METHOD

This study adopts a conceptual paper design based on an integrative literature review. The review was conducted to synthesize theoretical perspectives from English Language Teaching (ELT), ecological literacy, intercultural communicative competence,

Global Citizenship Education, and interreligious ecological ethics in order to develop a conceptual-pedagogical framework for integrating ecological awareness, interreligious values, and global citizenship into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. Unlike empirical studies that investigate classroom implementation or learning outcomes, this study aims to construct a theoretical framework by integrating concepts from multiple but related fields. Consistent with [Snyder \(2019\)](#), an integrative literature review serves as a rigorous research methodology for mapping existing knowledge, identifying conceptual gaps, and generating new theoretical perspectives.

The review focused on four interconnected domains: (1) English Language Teaching and EFL materials development, (2) ecological literacy and ecolinguistics, (3) intercultural communicative competence and Global Citizenship Education, and (4) interreligious ecological ethics. To ensure both theoretical depth and contemporary relevance, the review included peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, book chapters, and institutional publications related to language education, sustainability education, intercultural learning, and ecological responsibility. Both foundational and recent studies were included to provide a balanced theoretical foundation for developing the proposed framework.

Relevant literature was identified through comprehensive searches of peer-reviewed academic databases, scholarly search engines, and authoritative institutional publications. The search strategy was designed to capture foundational and recent scholarship related to English Language Teaching, ecological literacy, ecolinguistics, intercultural communicative competence, Global Citizenship Education, and interreligious ecological ethics. Searches employed combinations of keywords such as English Language Teaching and ecological awareness, EFL and sustainability education, eco-critical language awareness, EFL materials and global citizenship, intercultural communicative competence in language learning, religion and ecology, and interreligious values and environmental responsibility. The review primarily considered publications from 2000 to 2026 while also including earlier seminal works that provided essential theoretical foundations for the study.

The selection of literature was guided by three inclusion criteria. First, the sources had to address at least one of the central concepts of the study, namely ecological awareness, interreligious values, intercultural communicative competence, Global Citizenship Education, or EFL learning. Second, the publications needed to provide theoretical or pedagogical insights relevant to the development of the proposed framework. Third, priority was given to academically credible and conceptually relevant sources that explicitly connected language education with ecological, intercultural, or ethical perspectives. Studies focusing exclusively on environmental science without educational implications or language instruction without ecological, intercultural, or

ethical relevance were excluded from the final analysis. Applying these criteria resulted in a final corpus of 17 sources. This number was considered conceptually sufficient because the selected publications collectively represented the principal theoretical perspectives underpinning the study. Additional publications identified during the search largely reiterated concepts already represented in the selected corpus and therefore contributed limited new insights to the conceptual synthesis.

The selected literature was analyzed using conceptual thematic synthesis. Following [Jabareen \(2009\)](#), conceptual frameworks are developed by identifying, comparing, and integrating related concepts into a coherent theoretical structure. Accordingly, the selected sources were analyzed comparatively to identify recurring concepts, theoretical relationships, and pedagogical principles across the different fields of inquiry. Rather than synthesizing empirical findings, the analysis focused on integrating complementary theoretical perspectives into a unified conceptual framework that could inform EFL learning.

The conceptual synthesis followed three iterative stages. First, key concepts related to ecological literacy, interreligious values, intercultural communicative competence, Global Citizenship Education, and EFL pedagogy were identified across the reviewed literature. Second, these concepts were systematically compared to examine their theoretical relationships, areas of convergence, and complementary pedagogical implications. Finally, the synthesized concepts were organized into broader pedagogical dimensions that collectively informed the development of the proposed conceptual framework for EFL learning.

This synthesis resulted in four interconnected pedagogical dimensions: linguistic, ecological, intercultural, and ethical, which collectively constitute the proposed conceptual framework. Rather than functioning as independent components, these dimensions were conceptualized as complementary elements that integrate language learning with ecological awareness, intercultural dialogue, ethical reflection, and global citizenship. Detailed explanations of each dimension, together with their theoretical relationships and pedagogical implications, are presented in the Results and Discussion section.

As a conceptual study, this research is intended to provide theoretical guidance rather than empirical validation. Its primary contribution is a coherent conceptual framework that may inform future curriculum development, EFL materials design, teacher education, and classroom practice. Future empirical studies are encouraged to examine, adapt, and validate the proposed framework across diverse educational contexts by investigating its implementation, teachers' pedagogical practices, learners' responses, and its potential contribution to language proficiency, ecological literacy, intercultural competence, and global citizenship.

RESULTS

Since this study provides a conceptual rather than empirical approach, the discussion should be understood as an interpretation of existing scholarship rather than findings generated from classroom observation or experimental data. The reviewed literature converged around four interconnected themes that collectively inform the proposed framework: (1) ecological literacy as a pedagogical orientation for EFL learning, (2) interreligious values as cultural and ethical resources, (3) ecological topics as authentic contexts for language learning, and (4) a four-dimensional conceptual framework integrating linguistic, ecological, intercultural, and ethical dimensions. Together, these themes illustrate how language education can respond to contemporary ecological and societal challenges while maintaining its primary focus on communicative competence.

English Learning as a Space for Ecological Literacy

One of the clearest themes emerging from the reviewed literature is the growing recognition that ecological literacy can enrich English language learning by providing authentic contexts for communication and critical inquiry. Rather than treating environmental issues as supplementary classroom topics, recent scholarship increasingly positions ecological concerns as meaningful content through which learners can develop language proficiency while engaging with questions of sustainability, responsibility, and global citizenship. This perspective is consistent with the view that effective EFL materials should integrate meaningful content with authentic communicative experiences that support learners' linguistic, cognitive, and social development (Tomlinson, 2012).

This perspective is closely aligned with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which emphasizes that education should equip learners with the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary to contribute to more sustainable societies (UNESCO, 2020). Within EFL classrooms, environmental topics such as climate change, biodiversity, waste management, pollution, and sustainable lifestyles provide authentic opportunities for students to read, discuss, write, and communicate about issues that are both globally significant and locally relevant. Consequently, language learning becomes a means of understanding and responding to contemporary environmental challenges rather than merely practicing linguistic forms in isolated contexts. Consequently, language learning becomes a means of understanding and responding to contemporary environmental challenges rather than merely practicing linguistic forms in isolated contexts. This reflects contemporary perspectives on ELT materials development, which emphasize designing

learning experiences that connect language use with authentic social realities and meaningful communication (Tomlinson, 2020).

The evolution of ecological literacy within ELT can be observed through the progression of previous scholarship. Early studies primarily demonstrated that environmental topics could be incorporated into English teaching materials without compromising language-learning objectives. Jacobs and Goatly (2000), for example, illustrated how ecological themes could enrich ELT coursebooks by providing meaningful subject matter for language practice. More recent studies, however, extend this view by arguing that ecological issues should not merely supply instructional content but should also encourage learners to examine how language shapes understandings of sustainability, environmental justice, and human relationships with the natural world. Micalay-Hurtado and Poole (2022) describe this perspective as eco-critical language awareness, emphasizing that language both reflects and constructs ecological realities. This perspective is consistent with ecolinguistic research, which argues that language shapes how individuals perceive, interpret, and respond to ecological issues (Stibbe, 2021). Similar perspectives have also been reported in Indonesian EFL contexts, where ecological themes encourage students to develop ecological critical awareness through contextualized classroom learning (Achadiyah, 2025).

Recent scholarship further broadens this pedagogical orientation by positioning ecological literacy as an integral component of contemporary English language education. Kazazoglu (2025) argues that eco-literacy supports learners in connecting language development with environmentally responsible practices, while Dhanyamol and Sethunarayanan (2025) demonstrate how sustainability can be incorporated through authentic environmental texts, interdisciplinary learning, project-based activities, and collaborative inquiry. Collectively, these studies indicate that ecological literacy has evolved from a thematic addition to a broader educational perspective that encourages learners to engage critically with environmental issues through meaningful communication.

Viewed together, the literature reveals a clear conceptual shift in how ecological literacy is understood within ELT. Earlier scholarship focused primarily on whether environmental issues could be integrated into English language teaching, whereas more recent work has shifted attention toward how ecological perspectives can transform language education itself. This evolution reflects a shift from using environmental topics simply to contextualize vocabulary or reading activities to employing them as vehicles for critical thinking, ethical reflection, intercultural dialogue, and social responsibility. In this sense, ecological literacy is no longer peripheral to language education but increasingly represents an educational orientation that aligns communicative learning with broader societal goals. This evolution reflects a movement

away from using environmental topics simply to contextualize vocabulary or reading activities toward employing them as vehicles for critical thinking, ethical reflection, intercultural dialogue, and social responsibility, which are central objectives of Global Citizenship Education (UNESCO, 2015).

Building on this progression, the present study conceptualizes ecological literacy as one of the foundational dimensions of EFL learning for global citizenship. Ecological issues are viewed not merely as instructional themes but as authentic pedagogical contexts through which learners develop communicative competence while simultaneously cultivating environmental awareness, intercultural understanding, and ethical responsibility. while simultaneously cultivating environmental awareness, intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997), and ethical responsibility. This synthesis provides the ecological dimension of the proposed four-dimensional framework and establishes the conceptual basis for integrating sustainability-oriented perspectives into English language education.

Interreligious values as cultural resources in EFL materials

The reviewed literature also indicates that interreligious values can function as cultural and ethical resources in EFL materials. Language learning is inseparable from culture. Kramsch (1993) argues that culture is central to meaning-making in language education, while Byram (1997) emphasizes that intercultural communicative competence involves the ability to interpret, relate, and communicate across cultural differences. From this perspective, EFL materials can include religious and cultural perspectives not as doctrinal instruction, but as resources for intercultural understanding and ethical reflection within culturally diverse learning environments (Baker, 2021).

Interreligious ecological values are especially relevant because the ecological crisis is not only a scientific or technical problem, but also a moral and cultural challenge. Nasr (1996) argues that environmental degradation is connected with a deeper spiritual and cultural crisis. Pope Francis (2015) presents care for the common home as an ecological, social, and ethical responsibility. The Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change (2015) also frames environmental responsibility as a moral duty connected with human accountability before God and the protection of creation. These perspectives show that religious traditions can offer ethical language for discussing ecological responsibility.

The Christian and Islamic perspectives discussed in this article are intended as illustrative examples rather than exhaustive representations of interreligious ecological thought. These traditions are highlighted because they have generated influential contemporary discussions on ecological responsibility and are particularly relevant to the educational contexts considered in this study, especially in culturally and religiously

diverse settings such as Indonesia. Nevertheless, the proposed framework remains open to incorporating ecological values and ethical perspectives from other religious and cultural traditions, provided that they are presented as resources for intercultural dialogue and ethical reflection rather than as doctrinal instruction. In EFL learning, such values can be transformed into pedagogical content through carefully designed learning materials that integrate meaningful themes with explicit language-learning objectives (Tomlinson, 2012). Students may read short texts about care for creation in different traditions, discuss how religious communities contribute to environmental protection, or write reflections on moderation, gratitude, solidarity, responsibility, and respect for life. These activities can support language development while also encouraging students to understand how different communities construct ethical meanings around ecology.

Another recent literature on EFL, culture, and sustainability supports this direction. Wu and Shafait (2024) show that cultural teaching remains a central component of EFL education, while contemporary materials development emphasizes integrating socially meaningful content into language learning (Tomlinson, 2020). Therefore, integrating interreligious ecological values can strengthen EFL materials by connecting ecological awareness with intercultural competence and global citizenship. However, this integration must be handled carefully. Religious traditions should not be presented in ways that are exclusive, apologetic, or doctrinal. Instead, they should be framed comparatively and dialogically, allowing students to identify shared ethical concerns while respecting differences, which reflects the principles of intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997). In this article, interreligious values are therefore positioned within the ethical dimension of the proposed framework, where they support ecological responsibility, intercultural understanding, and respectful communication.

Ecological Topics for Developing Language Skills

The reviewed literature consistently suggests that ecological topics provide authentic communicative contexts through which language learning and ecological awareness can be developed simultaneously. Rather than functioning as supplementary themes, ecological and interreligious issues enable learners to engage with real-world problems while practicing English in meaningful contexts. This perspective aligns with a global education approach to English Language Teaching (ELT), which positions language learning as a means of developing communicative competence alongside critical thinking, intercultural understanding, and social responsibility (Cates, 2022). Consequently, ecological topics should be understood not merely as instructional content but as pedagogical resources that enrich both language development and global

citizenship education.

Within this pedagogical orientation, receptive language skills enable learners to engage with diverse ecological perspectives through authentic texts and spoken discourse. Reading materials on climate change, biodiversity, sustainability, or religious approaches to environmental responsibility, together with listening resources such as interviews, documentaries, podcasts, and public speeches, expose students to multiple ways of understanding ecological challenges. Beyond developing comprehension and vocabulary, these materials encourage learners to interpret environmental issues critically, compare cultural perspectives, and recognize how language shapes ecological awareness in different social contexts.

Productive language skills further extend ecological learning by enabling students to express, negotiate, and critically evaluate environmental issues through communication. Activities such as reflective writing, argumentative essays, presentations, debates, interviews, and collaborative discussions encourage learners to organize ideas, justify opinions, compare perspectives, and propose responses to ecological challenges. In this way, English becomes a medium through which students participate in authentic social and environmental dialogue rather than merely demonstrating linguistic accuracy. Productive language use therefore supports the simultaneous development of communicative competence, ethical reflection, and intercultural understanding.

Several studies reinforce this pedagogical perspective by demonstrating that ecological literacy can be integrated into language learning through authentic communicative tasks and sustainability-oriented instruction for this view. [Kazazoglu \(2025\)](#) shows that eco-literacy-focused writing activities can connect language development with environmental awareness. [Gayatri and Sit \(2024\)](#), in the Indonesian EFL context, highlight the relevance of sustainable EFL instruction through blended global discussion, showing how students can engage in global issues through communicative and collaborative learning. These studies suggest that ecological topics can become meaningful pedagogical vehicles for language learning when they are connected with explicit linguistic objectives and authentic communication.

Taken together, the reviewed literature demonstrates a clear shift in the pedagogical role of ecological topics within EFL learning. Earlier studies primarily viewed environmental issues as meaningful themes that could enrich language materials ([Jacobs & Goatly, 2000](#)), whereas more recent scholarship conceptualizes ecological literacy as an authentic context for fostering critical communication, sustainability, intercultural dialogue, and global citizenship ([Kazazoglu, 2025](#); [Dhanyamol & Sethunarayanan, 2025](#); [Gayatri & Sit, 2024](#)). Building on this conceptual development, the present study argues that ecological topics should function as pedagogical vehicles through which linguistic,

ecological, intercultural, and ethical dimensions are integrated within EFL learning. This synthesis provides the practical foundation for the proposed four-dimensional framework.

A Four-Dimensional Conceptual Framework for EFL Materials

The proposed framework can guide the design of EFL materials through several interconnected stages. Material developers may first identify ecological issues that are relevant to learners' local contexts before aligning these topics with explicit linguistic objectives. This approach is consistent with recent perspectives on EFL materials development, which emphasize that effective instructional materials should be structured, contextually relevant, and capable of scaffolding learners through meaningful and authentic learning experiences rather than merely presenting language forms (Zulfikar et al., 2026; Tomlinson, 2020).

Building on the preceding synthesis, this study proposes a four-dimensional conceptual framework for integrating ecological awareness, interreligious values, and global citizenship into EFL materials. Drawing on Jabareen's (2009) conception of conceptual frameworks as networks of interconnected concepts, the framework brings together linguistic, ecological, intercultural, and ethical dimensions into a unified pedagogical model. Rather than functioning as independent components, these dimensions interact dynamically to support meaningful language learning that integrates communicative competence with ecological literacy, intercultural understanding, and ethical reflection.

The linguistic dimension ensures that the primary goal of EFL learning remains language development. Ecological and interreligious themes should support vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, writing organization, speaking fluency, listening comprehension, grammar practice, and communicative competence. In this sense, ecological content becomes a vehicle for language learning rather than a replacement for linguistic objectives.

The ecological dimension refers to learners' awareness of environmental problems and sustainable responsibility. This dimension includes topics such as climate change, pollution, waste management, biodiversity, sustainable consumption, and local environmental issues. It encourages students to understand ecological problems not only as global information, but also as issues connected with daily habits, social systems, and cultural values.

The intercultural dimension enables students to encounter diverse cultural perspectives on ecological responsibility. Since English functions as a global language, EFL materials can help students compare local and global experiences, interpret different

cultural meanings, and communicate respectfully across differences. This dimension is closely related to intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993). The ethical dimension highlights values that guide human responses to ecological problems. In this article, interreligious values are located within this dimension. Values such as care for creation, moderation, responsibility, gratitude, solidarity, justice, and respect for life can help students understand ecology as a moral concern as well as a scientific issue. However, these values must be presented as cultural and ethical resources, not as doctrinal instruction.

Although each dimension has a distinct pedagogical function, the proposed framework emphasizes their dynamic interdependence rather than treating them as isolated components. The linguistic dimension serves as the instructional foundation through which ecological, intercultural, and ethical content is communicated and negotiated. Ecological issues provide authentic contexts that stimulate meaningful language use, while the intercultural dimension encourages learners to interpret these issues from multiple cultural and social perspectives. The ethical dimension deepens this process by guiding learners to reflect on values such as responsibility, solidarity, moderation, and respect for life when discussing environmental challenges. Together, these dimensions create an integrated learning process in which language development, ecological literacy, intercultural understanding, and ethical reflection reinforce one another, ultimately supporting the broader goal of global citizenship education.

The proposed framework contributes to ELT scholarship by connecting areas that are often discussed separately: ecological literacy, intercultural competence, interreligious ethics, and global citizenship education. The proposed framework can guide the design of EFL materials through several interconnected stages. Material developers may first identify ecological issues that are relevant to learners' local contexts before aligning these topics with explicit linguistic objectives. This approach is consistent with contemporary views of materials development, which emphasize that effective language-learning materials should integrate meaningful content, authentic communication, and clearly articulated pedagogical goals rather than merely presenting linguistic forms (Tomlinson, 2020).

Intercultural and interreligious perspectives can then be incorporated to encourage comparative reflection, while learning tasks should promote communication, critical inquiry, and collaborative problem-solving. While previous studies have explored sustainability in ELT (Dhanyamol & Sethunarayanan, 2025; Kazazoglu, 2025), cultural teaching in EFL (Wu & Shafait, 2024), and sustainable EFL instruction in Indonesia (Gayatri & Sit, 2024), this article brings these concerns into a single conceptual-pedagogical framework. The framework may guide teachers and material developers in designing EFL materials that are linguistically meaningful, culturally responsive, ethically reflective, and ecologically relevant.

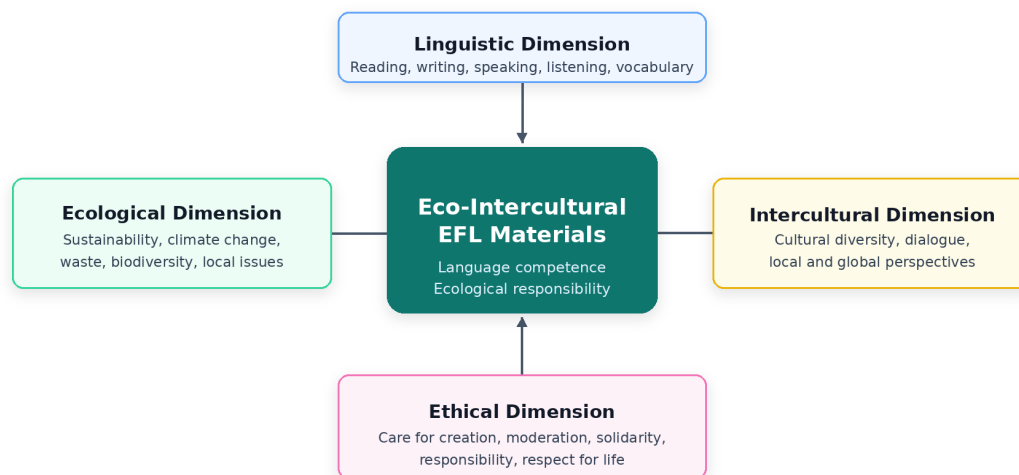


Figure 1: Four-dimensional conceptual framework for integrating ecological awareness, interreligious values, and global citizenship in EFL materials

Figure 1 illustrates the interaction among the four dimensions within the proposed framework. Rather than functioning as independent elements, the dimensions operate as an integrated pedagogical system. The linguistic dimension provides the communicative foundation that enables learners to engage with ecological issues, while the ecological dimension supplies authentic content that makes language learning socially relevant. The intercultural dimension broadens learners' perspectives by encouraging dialogue across cultural contexts, and the ethical dimension supports reflective engagement with environmental responsibility through shared values. The interaction of these dimensions creates eco-intercultural EFL materials that simultaneously promote language competence, ecological awareness, intercultural understanding, ethical reflection, and global citizenship.

The originality of the proposed framework lies not merely in identifying these four dimensions, but in explaining how they function as an interconnected pedagogical system. Previous studies have examined ecological literacy, intercultural communicative competence, eco-critical language awareness, and Global Citizenship Education largely as

separate areas of inquiry. By integrating these perspectives with interreligious ecological ethics, the present framework demonstrates how meaningful language learning emerges through the interaction of linguistic development, authentic ecological content, intercultural dialogue, and ethical reflection.

In this way, the model does not simply add environmental topics to English lessons. Rather, it offers a conceptual structure for designing EFL materials in which language learning, ecological awareness, intercultural dialogue, and ethical reflection support one another. This makes the framework especially relevant for religiously and culturally diverse contexts, such as Indonesia, where ecological responsibility can be discussed through both global sustainability discourse and local religious-cultural values.

DISCUSSION

Although the proposed framework offers a meaningful way to connect ecological awareness, interreligious values, and global citizenship in EFL learning, its implementation also presents several pedagogical challenges. First, teachers need sufficient pedagogical sensitivity to handle ecological and interreligious topics without turning language lessons into moral instruction or religious debate. In diverse classrooms, religious references may be interpreted differently by students depending on their beliefs, backgrounds, and previous experiences. Therefore, interreligious values should be presented comparatively and dialogically, with emphasis on shared ethical concerns rather than doctrinal claims.

Second, the integration of ecological and interreligious perspectives requires careful material selection. Texts and activities should be age-appropriate, linguistically accessible, and culturally inclusive. If materials are too abstract, students may struggle to connect them with language-learning objectives. If they are too religiously specific, they may create discomfort or appear to privilege one tradition over others. For this reason, teachers and material developers need to balance linguistic goals, ecological content, intercultural reflection, and classroom sensitivity.

Third, contextual differences among educational settings must be considered. In religiously diverse contexts such as Indonesia, interreligious ecological themes may be highly relevant because students are already familiar with the role of religion in public and community life. However, in more secular contexts, or in classrooms where religious discussion is institutionally restricted, the ethical dimension may need to be framed more broadly through cultural values, environmental responsibility, and global citizenship. This means that the proposed framework should not be applied rigidly, but adapted according to students' backgrounds, institutional policies, teacher readiness, and local curriculum expectations.

Fourth, implementation may be limited by teachers' confidence, available materials, curriculum demands, and assessment systems that prioritize linguistic accuracy over critical reflection. Recent research on sustainability in ELT shows that challenges such as limited resources, teacher preparation, curriculum alignment, and institutional support remain significant barriers to integrating environmental sustainability into language education (Dhanyamol & Sethunarayanan, 2025). Similarly, Gayatri and Sit (2024) note that sustainable EFL education requires pedagogical adaptation, especially in the Indonesian context, where global communication, local realities, and classroom practices need to be connected carefully.

These implementation challenges also highlight important implications for teacher education and professional development. Successfully integrating ecological awareness, interreligious values, and global citizenship into EFL learning requires teachers to develop competencies that extend beyond language pedagogy alone. Pre-service and in-service teacher education programs should therefore provide opportunities for teachers to explore sustainability education, intercultural communicative competence, ethical facilitation, and the pedagogical use of authentic ecological materials. Professional development initiatives may also encourage teachers to design interdisciplinary learning activities, facilitate inclusive classroom dialogue on sensitive cultural and religious issues, and critically evaluate learning materials from ecological and intercultural perspectives. Strengthening these competencies is essential if the proposed framework is to be implemented in ways that remain pedagogically sound, culturally inclusive, and responsive to diverse educational contexts.

Another important challenge concerns assessment. If ecological and intercultural learning are included in EFL materials, teachers need to decide how these dimensions will be evaluated. Traditional assessment may focus mainly on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, or writing accuracy. However, activities based on ecological awareness and global citizenship may also require assessment of critical thinking, intercultural reflection, collaborative communication, and ethical reasoning. This does not mean that EFL assessment should become moral evaluation. Rather, teachers can assess students' ability to express ideas clearly, compare perspectives respectfully, support arguments, and use appropriate language to discuss ecological and social issues.

The proposed framework also has implications for material development. EFL materials should avoid presenting environmental themes as superficial topics or religious values as isolated cultural references. Instead, materials should connect ecological problems with language objectives, intercultural interpretation, and ethical reflection. For example, a unit on plastic waste may include a reading text about local environmental problems, vocabulary related to sustainability, a listening activity about community initiatives, a comparative text on religious or cultural values of moderation, and a writing

task asking students to propose an environmental campaign. Such a design allows the linguistic, ecological, intercultural, and ethical dimensions to work together.

Therefore, the value of the proposed framework depends on how it is adapted in practice. It should not be understood as a fixed model to be applied uniformly in all contexts. Rather, it is a conceptual guide that can help teachers and material developers make thoughtful pedagogical decisions. Future empirical studies are needed to examine how teachers interpret this framework, how students respond to ecological and interreligious materials, and how such materials affect language development, ecological literacy, intercultural competence, and global citizenship.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the integration of ecological awareness, interreligious values, and global citizenship into English Language Teaching (ELT) through a conceptual paper based on an integrative literature review. The synthesis of the reviewed literature demonstrates that ecological issues can function not merely as supplementary themes but as authentic pedagogical contexts through which learners develop language competence alongside ecological awareness, intercultural understanding, and ethical reflection. The analysis also suggests that meaningful EFL learning can be strengthened when ecological literacy, intercultural dialogue, and interreligious ethical perspectives are integrated within a coherent pedagogical framework.

The principal contribution of this study is the development of a four-dimensional conceptual framework that brings together linguistic, ecological, intercultural, and ethical dimensions within a single pedagogical model. Rather than treating these dimensions as separate educational concerns, the framework conceptualizes them as mutually reinforcing components of meaningful language learning. In doing so, the study extends existing discussions of ecological literacy, intercultural communicative competence, Global Citizenship Education, and interreligious ecological ethics by demonstrating how these perspectives can be integrated to inform the design of EFL materials and learning experiences.

The proposed framework also offers practical implications for English language education. It provides teachers, curriculum developers, and material designers with a conceptual guide for creating learning experiences that integrate authentic ecological issues with explicit language-learning objectives, intercultural dialogue, and ethical reflection. Consequently, English learning is repositioned not only as a means of developing communicative competence but also as an educational space where learners engage critically and responsibly with contemporary ecological and social challenges.

Nevertheless, this study is limited by its conceptual nature. Since the framework

was developed through literature synthesis rather than empirical classroom investigation, it has not yet been implemented or evaluated in authentic educational settings. Future research should examine how the framework can be adapted across different EFL contexts and investigate its influence on language development, ecological literacy, intercultural competence, ethical reflection, and global citizenship. Classroom-based studies involving teachers, learners, curriculum developers, and instructional materials would further refine and validate the proposed model.

This study contributes to ELT scholarship by offering an integrated conceptual perspective on the relationship between language education, ecological sustainability, intercultural learning, and ethical responsibility. Beyond its immediate pedagogical applications, the proposed framework provides a theoretical foundation for future curriculum development, material design, teacher education, and empirical research. More broadly, it invites English language educators to reconsider the role of EFL as a transformative educational practice that prepares learners to participate responsibly in culturally diverse and ecologically interconnected societies.

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