

EXPLORATION OF ECOPEDAGOGICAL AND ECOLINGUISTICS ELEMENTS IN SECONDARY LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS FROM TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT:

This study explores the eco-pedagogical and eco-linguistic elements from teacher's perspective in the English textbooks of the Punjab Text board of class 6th to class 10th. This study aims to find out the discourse related to the environment in secondary-level books of English and to analyze the effects of these elements on the minds of the students from teacher's point of view. The study is quantitative in nature. The opinions of teachers are taken through interviews. Gaard and Frier's Eco pedagogical approach has been used to analyze the teachers' interviews. The result shows that there is less environment-related content in the books which is not enough for developing an understanding of students related to the environment and to enhance their language skills.

KEYWORDS: Eco-linguistics, Eco-pedagogy, English Language Teaching, Perspective, Environment

INTRODUCTION

Climate change is a growing concern and has become a 'hot topic' in the past few decades. Scientists have presented numerous types of research on the disaster that climate change is going to bring with it and the impacts of it on all living things including human beings. There is a diversity of information related to climate change. This diversity is not only in the perspectives but also varies from language to language and the use of language for this specific purpose. As a result of which, climate change has become a hot debate in the recent era and it is discussed on political, and media forums and has become a part of academic discourses too.

Different discourses in different languages have been written on this topic that includes the solutions to this problem. Even the scientific language of climate change is

different in different societies. (Fløttum,2010) says that there is a connection between language and climate like other social issues. Different researchers in the research have shown that there is a connection between climate and language and the way the climate is presented in different cultural contexts. Language not only puts forward the facts and information related to something but also it influences the minds and shapes behaviors. Thus language plays an important role in changing the behaviors of people related to any social aspect i.e. climate change. In the past, different writers of climate change communication have used different strategies both at the micro-level (words, semantics) and at the macro-level (interpretation of texts).

The Global Climate Risk Index, in its annual report of 2020 has declared that Pakistan is at 5th number in the list of most vulnerable

countries to climate change. Due to extreme weather conditions, from the year 1999 to 2018, almost 9989 people lost their lives and the country faced an economic loss of around 3.8 billion dollars (Dawn, 2019) The Government of Pakistan is working on the development of its climate change policies and their implementation but the carbon emission in Pakistan has raised to 123% with the passing years and the development of economy in the country has increase this rate. English is the official language of Pakistan but not the first language of the people of Pakistan and only 23% percent of the population can speak it. There are five provinces in Pakistan and the people of all these provinces speak different languages other than these regional languages, several other local languages, a few of which are becoming endangered languages due to lack of written data and lack of interest in the government of the country to preserve these languages. The only regional language that have gained the status of an official within the province is the Sindhi language while other regional languages lack this status too. The most important mediums of the state including the government and media use both English and Urdu to a greater extent. Education is an evergreen tool for spreading awareness among the masses of the country and it starts shaping the minds of humans at a very young age. As much as a human learns, he/she becomes more capable of doing things differently and intellectually.

Language plays a vital and core role in spreading messages and awareness regarding climate change. Though there is a diversity of languages in Pakistan, one thing that is common in the whole country is English Textbooks which are the part and parcel of the learning system to help students learn, understand and speak the English language. The government gave authority to all the provinces to design the curriculum.

Although the government of Pakistan is working on making policies on climate change the process is too slow. Pakistan needs to make its stance with respect to climate change and it is only possible when there is a pressure from

the public on the government of the country which is null because of the lack of awareness in public related to this growing threat. Pakistan is facing two issues related to climate change at this time. There is a lack of awareness on the topic and less content related to the environment is present in the Textbooks. A person, who does not know what an increased rate of emission of CO₂ is going to do in the future and how his life is going to be affected by it, will not be able to debate on this topic. A person can debate well on things only when he has a complete understanding of that particular topic and language is a factor that can help to get a proper understanding in this regard. To deal with climate change, scientific literacy is required; debate on this issue is necessary which is possible when people understand this phenomenon and the issues related to it. This study is about the role of eco-pedagogical approaches included in English Textbooks related to climate change.

The term Eco-pedagogy originated first in Latin America and then used by the Brazilian educationist Paulo Freire. According to him, teachers treat students as empty bank accounts which they fill with their knowledge. Students, being ignorant, cannot deny the teachings of the teachers which is an injustice to students. A teacher and students should bond in a way that both participants can learn from one another and students should be able to not only recognize the problem but also find solutions to existing problems. In short, pedagogy should not be detached from the outer world and for this purpose, the term eco-pedagogy has been introduced. The main aim of eco-pedagogy is to make the students able to think about the ongoing environmental issues. Teachers make curriculum and improve teaching strategies to enhance the understanding related to the present era's issues and the ways to overcome them. There is a dire need for environmental pedagogies to widen the level of understanding related to environmental issues in the students. There is a direct connection between human actions with environmental issues but the lack of awareness is worsening the issue.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Eco-linguistics says that it is the selection of words and phrases that can affect the environment directly or indirectly. It can help the environment to heal or get destroyed (Dash & Phil, 2019). (Steffensen & Fill, 2014) elaborates and supports the emergence of the discipline of Eco-linguistics by saying that there was a need for linguists to move from traditional studies to real-world problems. This deviation was started by Haugen in 1970 when he wrote “the study of the interaction between any given language and its environment.” (Piersol & Timmerman, 2017) argues in the study that education plays an important role in developing the understanding of students regarding social and ecological challenges. It is aimed through different global treaties and agreements that education will include these perspectives to divert students’ attention towards the growing concerns but still, educational patterns lack these thoughtful aspects. Education needs to be reformed and involves this kind of visionary pedagogy which is based on the sustainability of the planet as (Gadotti & Torres, 2009) proposed in their studies.

(Wu, 2018) explains that language can play an important role in not only expressing how human beings are connected but also how they affect other living organisms as well as the environment in which they all are living. Language, on the one, hand helps us to think critically about the things going around us, and on the other hand, languages help us to think critically about the ways to cope with the ongoing problems. Keeping this in mind, it can be assumed that Eco-linguistics is the study of the relationship between language and environment.

Eco linguistics is not a narrow term but is a vast one as it addresses many issues. (Morgan et al., 2006) says in his research that Ecolinguistics is a discipline of linguistics that uses different technical analyses linguistically, the stories-we-live-by opens up the hidden mysteries of nature through language and helps the person to see the ecological perspectives linguistically. Furthermore, he says that it is

eco-linguistics that opens up different ways for studies related to critical discourses including philosophical aspects of language; it focuses on aspects of injustice in society and destructive aspects of the environment.

(Capstick et al., 2015) argues that awareness of climate change in different nations has changed with time but there are no such clear patterns that can indicate the exact reasons behind these changing perspectives. Their research is on reviewing the changing perspectives of the public with time. They say that there is a lack of literature related to growing concern about this upcoming threat.

According to (Freire, 1967), education is all about liberation and a student should be liberated enough to put forward his concerns rather than being compressed by the existing patriarchal and rotten practices in which one dominates the others. Problem-posing education, according to him, is a solution to bring revolution in education while leaders can only provide the grounds to others where they can critically think over an issue and try to resolve it.

(Gadotti & Torres, 2009) agrees with the study presented by Freire by discussing that Freire was the first one in Brazil to think about education differently and to give the world a different perspective of development through the point of view of education and socioeconomic issues. (Gadotti, 2010) continues his same concerns in his study of 2010 and argues that there is a dire need for revisiting curriculum and pedagogical strategies to precede the concept of sustainability. Ecopedagogy can fulfil these needs as it can critically analyze the relationship between nature and human beings.

Language cannot be studied separately; rather it is to be studied in the context of its surroundings which involve all the aspects including social, cultural, personal as well as societal aspects. These all factors help the language to grow and evolve in a broader context (Kramsch & Vork Steffensen, 2008). (Dharmendra Kumar et al., 2019) says in the

research that eco-pedagogy is something more than simple pedagogy as it challenges the patriarchal pedagogical structures and is a win-win game for the new generation who is more interested in saving the planet and life existing on it. It is not an effort of a single individual rather it is a fruitful result of the efforts of all the educators, researchers, students, and everyone interested in making a fear-free world for all living organisms. In his research, he has found that there is a high level of perception regarding eco-pedagogy that is present in the teachers regardless of their genders and ages. (Gaard, 2008) discusses in her study that eco-pedagogy is a framework in which students' discourses are analyzed to find any environmental issues. This theory does not only focus on the identification of environmental issues but also finds out the causes of these existing environmental issues along with the remedial approaches through which these issues can be addressed properly. According to her, eco-pedagogy helps to take out the students from the patriarchal classroom set-ups and to help them to build their relationship with the environment.

(McNaughton, 2010) investigates in his research the response to UNESCO's directive of 2005-2014 issued related to the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in which the educationists of the world are given instructions to spread awareness in the young generation and to make them prepare regarding the present era's issues related to sustainability. According to this research, education can play an essential role in spreading awareness related to the environment through educational drama in citizens all around the globe. (Misiaszek, 2015) adds in his research related to ecopedagogy by saying that Education for Sustainable development is the product of Environmental education whose main agenda is to structure education which tells that how the actions related to the environment can positively or negatively affect the societies without creating any oppression on the environment. This study focuses on the reinvention of the pedagogical frameworks.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data has been collected in the form of interviews with 25 teachers who teach English from the Punjab text board to different classes of secondary level. The teachers belonged to different educational backgrounds. 5 questions have been asked to them to take their point of view and analyze their pedagogical strategies to teach environmental texts to their students.

1. DISCOURSE RELATED TO ENVIRONMENT IN SECONDARY-LEVEL ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS

It has been found that there is a lack of environmental text in English language teaching textbooks (ELT) which is not enough to encourage students to take part in activities related to environmental protection. Goatly (2000) came up with the idea to examine how English grammar can play its role to encounter technology and its role in the exploitation of nature.

Teacher A says in her interview that "the material or discourse related to the environment is not enough in textbooks but, there is always a possibility." It shows that secondary-level teachers are not satisfied with the discourse they are teaching to students. By saying that there is always a possibility of betterment, she is pointing towards the fact that there is still room for betterment and curriculum setters should pay attention to this sensitive point while setting the curriculum. Professionals can be hired to set content in a textbook, these professionals should be given a scale to measure the proportions in which the curriculum is divided and they must check whether there are portions related to social texts as well as environmental texts or not.

Teacher B says that as per the requirement there is no such discourse at all which is directly related to the environment and which can help the students to understand environmental issues. It is true as the present environmental text is not enough for the enhancement of environmental sensitivity in students. The way the world is facing the serious threat of degradation of the environment, it needs precautions to overcome

the issue but the awareness level is still not up to the mark.

Teacher C agrees with the statement by saying “No, there is not enough discourse related to the environment in the present Punjab Textbooks for students. Only one chapter in each book and some even do not have that one chapter.” After doing a content analysis of the English textbooks at the secondary level, it has been found that there is either one chapter related to the environment in some books or not even a single chapter in some books. The environmental discourse does not directly hit the aims described in the charter of the United Nations where the priority is to include such discourse which does not only educate the students related to ongoing environmental issues but also helps in the development of critical thinking in students to think about the solution regarding the issues. Teacher D says “yes to some extent, there is some discourse in the present textbooks because students have to cover all the fields of the different living areas in senior books”. By saying this, she is agreeing with the fact that the students should be aware of the existing sensitive environmental issues.

Teacher E says that “there is not enough discourse related to the environment in the present Punjab text board books because mostly these environmental issues are found in science books but the way it is needed in 21st century in the current scenario so it needs to be discussed in English books.” She has rightly highlighted the point that educationists find these topics suitable for science books. In Pakistan, there are minimal chances of curriculum changes and it must be a daydream to change the books with changing needs.

2. SENSITIVITY OF TOPICS AND STUDENTS' AWARENESS LEVEL

The destruction of the environment can be seen in many ways since the advancement in technology has taken place and is found almost everywhere in the world. The sensitivity related to the environment started in the 1970s in Turkey in the wake of urbanization.

Environmental sensitivity can be defined as the willingness of an individual to make positive attempts and it can be raised in an individual through awareness. This level of awareness in kids can be raised through environmental education. Developing sensitivity related to the environment in individuals, families, educational institutions, media, and other platforms can play a vital role.

Teacher A agrees with the statement by saying ‘Yes, to some extent because I do not think that they are too young to understand these issues so we should tell them about the sensitivity of these issues.’ Apart from the students of primary level, secondary level students belong to the age group of almost 12-18 years where they along with being inquisitive about things start to think about alternative solutions. They try to think of reasons to make the world a better place. When they would read about things related to environmental issues and the gravity of these issues through their textbooks and teachers, they would share this knowledge with others in their surroundings. Another Teacher B shares her views by saying “we should teach these sensitive topics to secondary-level students but we cannot teach these topics to primary students. In our society, we make taboos out of sensitive issues rather than making them aware of these issues so that they can deal with the problem in a sane way in their practical lives.” She has highlighted a crucial point as in a country like Pakistan when it comes to social issues, people feel ashamed of sharing information. It would take decades to change the mindsets of people and make these issues normalized for discussion especially with the growing children so that they deal with things wisely in their practical lives. Similarly, in Pakistani society, the environment is not a sensitive issue because people are not aware of its sensitivity and the role they are playing to make things worse in the form of deforestation, etc. To make this issue a matter of concern for every citizen, it is necessary to include this topic in the textbooks as if the kids are not learning it at their home, they can learn it at least from their schools through their textbooks.

Teacher C and Teacher D have the same opinion as they say, “Yes, we should make students aware of these sensitive issues so that they can become able to deal with these issues.” Again, it is found that it is a common perception of teachers that including environmental text in secondary level English textbooks not only increases the sensitivity of students related to this very specific issue but also they become able to deal with the issue when they experience it.

Teacher E says “The discussion related to environmental issues, in my opinion, should be enhanced among the students only through knowing the issues the students will strive for their solutions.” It means that on one hand, the inclusion of environmental text will make them aware of the existence of the issues, the reasons behind them, and the relationship between human beings and the environment, and on another hand, it will help them to come up with possible solutions.

3. ECOPEDAGOGY AND THE ROLE OF A TEACHER

Education is directly linked with teaching and it is considered an important tool to empower learners with authentic knowledge. Teachers help in delivering this knowledge to their students. Teachers set their standards to deliver their knowledge effectively and it comes with experience. It is a teacher who develops an interest in students regarding anything. Teachers need to change their pedagogical strategies concerning the changing needs of students. Activity-Based Learning (ABL) is a method that urges students to take part in activities instead of just listening to things (Rafique et al, 2021). This method is quite different from the traditional teaching methods as it is based on two key elements including the

among their students (Rafique et al, 2021). active participation of students in classrooms and the collaboration of students which create a positive and progressive learning attitude The key role of a teacher in environmental education is to develop an environment friendly attitude in children to make them aware of their

Environmental education needs the participation and involvement of the participants in environmental activities and it enhances the expectations of the teacher's role in this concern. Teachers are considered role models for their students and in this case, they can become an important part of students to improve the situation.

Teacher A adds his remarks to the statement by saying, “Teacher’s role can be crucial for awareness. Teachers can teach or make students familiar with their environmental problems in a better way than their parents.” Two places where kids can learn about new things and the difference between right and wrong are either their homes or their schools. Parents are the first school of every kid as a kid learns to speak even from his parents. There are two main problems in Pakistani society, one is the lack of awareness related to environmental issues in a large number of the population and the second is the denial of parents to discuss social and environmental issues with their kids. One of the main reasons is people feel it hard to discuss things openly with their kids and the second thing is their lack of awareness regarding these growing concerns.

Teacher B shared her pedagogical strategy and said, “Role of a teacher is crucial again as a teacher, I prefer to show the consequences of such issues to students on multimedia so they can better experience the sensitivity of the issues.” Students themselves rarely face the consequence of climate change which is a consequence of increasing environmental issues. Not everyone has to face floods but a teacher in a class can share these details by showing the children videos or documentaries on such issues so that they come to know the results of the negligence of human beings towards the environment.

Teacher C added detailed remarks on the as a teacher to teach these issues, we need some same point by saying, “There are many social and environmental issues existing in this era so responsibilities towards the environment. specific skills like we can teach these issues through activities, For example, to teach a social

issue like unemployment we can show things to students on multimedia, similarly, we can show the things related to the environment to students which shows the students the gravity of students like the videos related to deforestation and global warming. Different activities can help in better understanding the students. The teacher plays a vital role in almost all aspects of life so a teacher can deliver these issues like no one else can to educate them, a teacher can tell the students about the consequences and will help to practice the things like throwing litter in the basket and gradually it becomes their responsibility and then their moral duty to take this habit along them throughout their lives.” It is true that when a child is growing up, a teacher or parents can help the child in developing the habits. If a child is taught a lesson of empathy at his home or school, he would learn how to be empathetic throughout his life. If he grows up in a carefree atmosphere, he would be careless about the things in his surroundings. Similarly, if a child is taught to treat animals with love and care, he would feel the soft corner of every animal in his heart whenever he sees one. In the same manner, a child can be made careful towards environmental and social issues too.

4. IMPACT OF ENVIRONMENTAL DISCUSSION ON THE STUDENTS

Environmental education is considered a way to enlighten the youth with knowledge of environmental issues. If the students are aware of environmental issues they will be able to raise their voices against the ongoing injustices against the environment. It is considered a way to make a relationship between man and the environment. Environmental education is promoted with the hope that it is a studentcentred education and through this educational setup, students will get equal opportunities to experience and understand things themselves.

Teacher A agrees with the statement and says “yes, an open discussion regarding any issue can change the mindset of the students. Education should be the source of happiness and acquiring the traditional skills within a

student”. Schools should not only emphasize on the academic performance of the students but also can help in the character building of the students. When such things are focused, the students will be able to think about their surroundings. They will learn that surroundings not only include their classroom and homes but also include every place around them.

Teacher B says “Students should be aware of the social issues and environmental issues because the textbooks which are taught to the students are not enough to educate students about the environment so the discussion can play a vital role in changing the mindsets of the students.” If the students are given such an atmosphere where they can discuss their ideas, listen to others, they will eventually develop a better understanding. If the teacher changes the classroom patterns, it will help the students to be more socially interactive and to learn more from their peers.

Teacher C, D and E says that due to the lack of time in class, the teachers can’t include students in the discussion. The main focus of the teachers revolves around completing the syllabus and preparing them for final exams. In Pakistan, we see that the whole education system is just about cramming and getting good grades. There is a lack of practical education. There are a few subjects including Science subjects where students learn things through practical but there is no such concept of practical learning in social sciences and humanities.

5. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INCLASS AND OUT-CLASS ACTIVITIES FOR ECOPEDAGOGY

Teacher A says Out-class and in-class activities both can create a better understanding for students. In-class activities can let the students be aware of the concepts but out-class activities help them to experience things. For example, if a student learns that planting a tree is good for the environment, he will be able to acknowledge its meaning in a better way when he goes out of the class and plants a tree.

Teacher B: “Yes, somewhat but it should have a proper plan honestly speaking due to our educational system, we do not have many opportunities for out-class activities and that also results in off-tracking of the course or syllabus to be covered”. Her remarks represent traditional pedagogical mindsets. Teachers and schools consider it a waste of time to take students out of class for any kind of extracurricular activity. In private schools, there are a lot of such activities and the fact is that the parents can afford the fee demanded by the schools for any such activity. On the other hand, the children of public schools cannot afford such activities and their parents consider it a waste of time too. This is the reason students remain in a limited sphere of learning within the classroom rather than going out. This also is a reason for the lack of analytical and critical skills in students.

Teacher C, D and E says that outdoor class activities are better because the students observe things practically. Practical things create longlasting impacts on their minds and when they just read theory they do not take much interest. Out of the class activities are also correlated with the theory taught in the class and make the concepts much more clear. To conclude, it can be said that the interviews of the teachers revealed that though they understand the sensitivity of the issue, they feel helpless in spreading environmental education due to two reasons i.e. the lack of environment-related content in English textbooks and the traditional pedagogical patterns. These two factors create many other hurdles like lack of awareness in students and the failure of the education system in making students unable to think critically.

CONCLUSION

The result from the selected interviews shows that teachers feel helpless taking students out of the context as there is no sign of environmental text in the textbooks. They know the sensitivity of the issue and feel it is necessary to discuss it with the students but lack of time, lack of

content and boundaries do not allow them to discuss these issues. The teachers of 6th, 7th and 9th classes feel a bit comfortable because the textbooks of these classes include one chapter related to the environment but one chapter includes one phenomenon related to environment and these chapters are not sufficient enough to discuss the sensitivity of the issue. In addition to this, the government does not conduct any such workshops with teachers to discuss the urgency of the issue nor do the schools divert the attention of the students towards these existing issues.

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