

### Ecological Consciousness in English Language Teaching: A Case Study of English Teachers at SBKWU, Quetta, through the Lens of Stibbe's Concepts



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**Abstract:** *Life in a natural setting allow societies to share knowledge and stories entail values independent of any awareness, interest, or appreciation of it by a conscious being (Naess & Guattari, 1986). Therefore, the language of stories determines critical thinking in specific social context (Okri, 1996). Hence the objectives of the study explored the culture of teaching that treats ecological perspectives and their need to be promoted in English department at Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University, Quetta. Current study asserts teachers awareness about the stories as mental modals and their language relationship to address ecological challenges in undergraduate classroom. The theoretical framework of Stibbe, (2021) Mental Modal embedded an influence on how cultural and educational context treats the ecosystem and gives awareness about the language of stories that exist in communities live by through their social context. The research determines to capture the perceptions of English department teachers using a thorough survey that makes use of qualitative approach. An in-depth interviews were recorded for the knowledge of the individualized experiences, attitudes, and convictions that respond to their culture of teaching and its promotion in pervasive rage of knowledge about their local environment in diverse language learning classroom through interpretative approach. The study concluded that teaching culture in Quetta is diverse with multiple challenges and issues existing in educational environment therefore, teachers seen to rise their focus on communication and human relations with the environment, particularly with the ways that help undergraduate students to shape their mental models explicitly about ecological sustainability as primary values for beneficial new stories to live by in emerging 21<sup>st</sup> century educational context.*

**Keywords:** Ecological perspectives, Stories, language teaching culture, mental models

#### 1. Introduction

Modern societies driven by social changes and cannot transform into a sustainable society where people survive collapse of current civilizations (Bendell 2018). However, according to Stibbe (2021) the use of language is beneficial that shape our cultural teaching

practices through stories to influence and determine people living in their context. In addition to that Stories are mental models that reveal harmony between human and environment.

However, a language interacts with its environment, and the study of the combination

of languages are the key to understanding functional relationships concerning the environmental issues in teaching classroom (Jacobs, 2000). Similarly, Haugen demonstrated how language and ecology are associated and emphasized the importance of studying language from an ecological perspective. In his analysis of the environment surrounding languages, he claimed that language only exists in the minds of those who use it and that it serves to connect speakers to their social and physical surroundings. However, in a society where language serves as a medium of interpretation (Haugen, 1971).

Furthermore, in higher education institutions, a new learning culture explores its potential for a sustainable, flexible, and inclusive approach rather than becoming confined to academic tradition (Barth, 2007). Therefore, the culture of teaching seems vital consideration and the role of teacher's perceptions about environmental challenges need a wider focus.

Hence, teaching and learning practices are compressed by language's ability to depict current environmental challenges in an insightful and understandable way (Brown, 1991). Conversely, the function of language and linguistic components have also been studied closely in language ecology in collaboration with multidisciplinary fields (quoted in Cates, 1990, p. 96). Thus, Linguistic ecology, which examines how a language of stories interact with its surroundings, directs attention first to the referential universe in which language is encoded (Haugen, 1971). Therefore, given the growing threat of ecosystem, Earth, and language extinction, an ecological perspective is now essential (Wu, 2018).

Thus, the current study determines an understanding that teachers need to acquire competencies in their teaching culture in order to interplay the construction of mental models through language use that help students to promote sustainable developments in higher educations and create harmony between human and physical environment.

#### **Problem Statement:**

The current study aims to address the outlined

challenges and gaps between language and teaching culture among undergraduate students of English department SBK Women's university. As a result, it is collapse of current civilization through teaching. However, the study associates an understanding professional development initiatives and enhance ecofriendly environment that align with the university's commitment to sustainability and harmony between students and their physical environment which reframe their mental models for learning in 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom.

#### **1.1. Research Questions:**

1. How the culture of teaching treats ecological perspectives that contribute stories live by?
2. How to promote awareness about the relationship between language and physical environment through the culture of teaching in English department at SBK Women's University, Quetta?

#### **1.2. Research Objectives:**

- To examine the perceptions of teaching culture through language of stories live by treats ecological perspectives
- To enhance awareness about the relationship between language and physical environment through the culture of teaching in English department at SBK Women's University, Quetta .

#### **Significance of the Study:**

The research aims to contribute to a more sustainable and environmentally conscious teaching culture and holds immense significance in cultivating ecological perspectives within the teaching culture in English department at SBK Women's university in district Quetta. The study seeks to foster teacher's narratives about environment that inspires them to integrate the language of stories in their teaching practices. However, it will help to shape student's awareness, values, and behaviors towards the harmony of human and environment.

#### **3. Literature Review:**

Sustainable development is the morally sound reaction to a global trend where research is increasingly conducted in the name of

commercial and private interests, influencing the characteristics of youth with university educations. ([Altner and Michelsen, 2005](#)). Increasing globalizations and complexities in higher education institutions acquire future-oriented perspectives to integrate teaching culture and harmony between human and environment (Rychen, 2001). However, the ecological crisis has a profound and substantial impact on how language teacher's awareness contribute to climate catastrophe and ecological perspectives in classroom with the attitudes, ideologies, stories and behaviors of language learners at higher level (Anderson, 1994).

Additionally, the research paper *Exploration of Eco Pedagogical and Ecolinguistics Elements in Secondary Level English Language Textbooks from Teacher's perspective* examined how little of the environment is covered in the texts, which is insufficient for improving students' language proficiency and helping them develop an understanding of the environment. Zia et al. (2023)

Moreover, Language is a tool for communication that helps people establish and socialize their cultural identities within a group (Gollnick & Chinn, 2006; Kitishat et al, 2020; Alfallaj, 2020; Al-AHdal, 2020; Al-Saggaf & Binti Rusli, 2021). Thus, language instruction promotes cultural development where learners can communicate their opinions and perspectives more comfortably in a socioemotional environment (Abacioglu, et al., 2019). Thus, the focus of EFL textbooks on ecological education in Jordan ought to extend beyond enhancing students' language skills to include fostering the development of critical thinking abilities that are valuable in the context of ecological sustainability (Jamal and Omari, 2014).

Furthermore, Omari (1996) notes that the use of language shape our stories because these stories are underground reservoirs that change individual perceptions according to their social practices. In addition to that as Stibbe (2021) explained that an awareness of how language and culture shape social, economic, cultural, and religious systems and how these constructions affect the wider systems that sustain lifecycle, is

necessary for advocating for equity in science and development. Therefore, the article of Hurtado & Poole (2022) entitled as, *Eco-critical language awareness for English language teaching (ELT): Promoting justice, wellbeing, and sustainability in the classroom* claimed that language learning contributes to ecological degradation. The paper Sustainability Competence: Raising Ecological Awareness came to the conclusion that learning a language is a potent means that will encourage a diversity of long-term communication approaches (Balčiūnaitienė, & Voronova, 2015).

Furthermore, higher level environmental issues related to sustainable and exploitative language patterns and speakers are correlated (Haugen, 2021). Moreover, language affected the vocabulary, content, grammatical structures, phonetic systems, and subject issues in social contexts, according to Sapir (2001). Thus, the research paper regarding Eco linguistics and future perspectives examined the challenges of modern linguistics in the framework of applied activities, which is mainly limited to language users who neglect the ecological domain that calls for their attention (Fill, 1993, 1996; Fill and Mühlhäusler, 2001; see also Kettemann and Penz, 2000; Döring et al., 2008).

## **5. Theoretical Framework:**

The theoretical foundation of the current study is based on Stibbe, (2021) Mental Model embedded an influence on how culture treats the ecosystem that support environmental concerns and to be aware of the stories that exist in communities live by in various social context. At the core of ecological concerns are mental models that impact behavior, hence according to him these models can be recognized as stories by its social and cultural context interpretation consciously.

### **5.1. Research Methodology:**

The following research paper is qualitative approach with interpretative paradigm. With this paradigm researcher develop individual understanding different from another's teaching experiences and social perspective (Alase, 2017). The teachers who shared their teaching experiences and the way they integrated mental

models into the teaching culture that addresses the ecosystem on which life depends in the classroom are the research participants in this study.

## **5.2. Design**

The research is qualitative in its nature. As qualitative analysis develop transparent steps and is more suited to the study for the pervasive knowledge to be analyzed for a comprehensive purpose (Tuffour, 2017)

## **5.3. Data Collection**

Participants in the research paper were seven English department lecturers with more than ten years of classroom experience from Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University, Quetta. With their permission, the interview was taped, and it took longer for the researchers to collect enough information for interpretation and analysis.

### **Data Analysis:**

As a research approach that clarifies observations of teachers addressing ecological viewpoints through language of stories, the chosen works are analyzed based on narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry helps to explore culture of teaching that treats teacher's stories through environmental viewpoints. It offers a more comprehensive framework for examining how people perceive and communicate the issues of the natural world as they are expressed in stories (Mertova & Webster, 2007). The recorded data was analyzed through transcription thoroughly to make sense of the information collected, keeping the research questions in due consideration.

### **5.3.1. Data Analysis and Discussion:**

The purpose of the study was to look the perceptions of the teachers about the language of stories live by in multi-cultural classroom context in English department at Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University district Quetta.

### **Interviews of Teacher's perceptions about ecological viewpoints that contribute stories live by in Culture of Teaching in English department at sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University**

Participant 1 has strong connection with ecological activities and deep rooted affiliations with nature since her childhood had been raised listening stories. She is narrating the same stories in her class in order to make students be aware of communicative teaching practices for her comfort.

“From my childhood I am listening the stories about farmers and their daily routine. My mother used to tell me the stories of animals, care for them and ways to prepare feedings for them as knowing their lifestyle. This sense of responsibility made me looking environment from different perspectives and I feel that this also reflects in my teaching experiences and looking into English books for positive interpretations.”

The above perception claims that childhood stories actually shape attitudes towards natural environment, it also help to build a relationship of positive use of language with environmental subject matters. The participant also stated that ecological awareness started from homes, community and educational contributions, the integrity of environmental responsibility is taken into consideration in this higher level language (Ablak & Yesiltas, 2020). Hence, Environmental awareness is crucial starting in early childhood education.

Participant 2 claimed that teachers teaching skills should be diverse and engaging about the practices of ecofriendly environment because it will help them to develop teacher- student attitude through language use in classroom.

“I am teaching in the department since 2017 and I came to know that teaching course outline is more important than practical activities. Our subject required more than what we as teachers are practicing in the department. I remember that teaching hunger games through lines interpretation in my last semester was more interesting as compare to teaching only the text summary or themes. Because in that text the stars, weathers, human connection with nature

is so beneficially connected.

The narration of the above participant concluded that human perceptions couldn't be detached from the close relationship towards nature. It is only the way teaching culture is being in practice. The participant stressed that higher educational institutions are test oriented and grade concerned, as result there is no ecofriendly relationship build between teacher and student.

Participant 3 said that teacher's insufficient interest is the reason for addressing ecological perspectives in English department.

“When I started teaching here in the department I found that teachers interest towards natural setting is insufficient for teaching in the class. They don't appreciate teaching outside the classroom in pleasant weather with cold breeze. Which I actually enjoyed in my class when I teach John Keats Ode to autumn and William Wordsworth Daffodils. I found that the words in the text like autumn/ smog, progress actually shape stories of students if not at initial but later, they develop a positive attitude in their behavior and concerns for nature.”

From the above narrative, it is concluded that teacher's methodology and HEC curriculum is not being justified in a productive way. The teacher should be aware of current issues and the use of linguistics concerns towards the function of language that help to eradicate the ecological problems or at least able to address them in a positive ways with creative teaching methods and practices. Additionally, her prime focused was on teacher's perceptions about their skills and she argues that teacher should also know the importance of environmental changes and their impact on language learning students not only inside classroom but also the external factors in their practices.

Participant 4 stated that teacher's awareness about learning background is more important because majority learners came from local communities and felt hurdles in understanding any lecture in English as effectives as it should be.

“I observed that our faculty is also not interested to provide practical knowledge about their subjects. Here in Quetta multi-cultural practices are more productive in classroom, because majority of the learning backgrounds are from urban areas or under developed cities. The local languages and examples provide easy learning rather than English language as effective.

Instead of being limited to language acquisition, the English language seeks to raise the topic of multidisciplinary. It might reflect current concerns, such as the necessity to include global warming into English. Teacher's methodologies need to be uplifted for addressing these emerging subjects more into their classroom environment and subject objectives. Because language is descriptive tool to communicate contemporary issues of ecological subjects in better way at this higher level for inculcating a sense of responsibility among students.

Qno2. How your perceptions could address ecological challenges in your class? Is there any contribution to build beneficial mental models among your students at this stage?

Participant 5 said that “I am teaching since 2018 in English department, but I don't see that there is such practice of the subject among teachers therefore they are unable to teach the real essence of the subject. There could be many reasons but I found that lack of teachers training and awareness is the actual failure. I recommend that teacher should be given training about the subject and teaching methods so that they could better deliver in English Classroom”.

From the above statement, it is clear that skill-based knowledge is important at a higher level as well. The teacher's updated knowledge and context of learning will build harmony and shape mental models of learners. It shows that mostly in Quetta, the higher institutions in the English department are less familiar with the importance of practical concern of subject and its implication in their social, cultural and mental ecologies. The awareness session should be given for productive implications of the subject because poor awareness of integrating language

and ecological concerns is now an issue to be investigated in English language schools as well.

Participant 6 said that teaching is an art rather a profession. Learning depends on teacher's leadership and knowledge about the subject and its creative exercises in order to build new stories for the learners. The perception about nature is vital for a teacher to teach in the department because most of the time subjects require behavior to frame the minds". The narrative she builds clearly addresses the planning and practice help to narrate stories in their social context for beneficial need of life they are living. It is teachers who could inculcate the interest of learners in sustainability and environmental growth using positive language in their practices.

Participant 7 provided a variety of activities that integrated environmental elements and the significance of nature into English-language education. She planned many initiatives for environmental awareness campaigns; among them were the publication of pamphlets, the creation of posters, the practice of giving speeches to her students, and the creation of slogans.

‘As I am the focal person of Kamyab Jawan Programe where, I organize events for green club. The objectives of the event are to plant trees, use Eco linguistics importance of different issues, posters and drawing that cover ecological issues and language within the system in studied. And I observed that monthly these event are providing interest of our faculty towards the subject awareness as well as our students will develop two skills; one is improving English language proficiency, and the other is reacting to nature very responsibly (27th April 2022)’

Each subject should address the environmental challenges since they are a concern for all subjects. Students develop a critical awareness of how humans behave toward nature when language teachers bring up environmental issues in the classroom. Teachers attempt to combine environmental issues with their awareness, but our language curricula need to sufficiently

integrate them. And she also added that university should provide teachers different trainings and session for being aware of teaching methods that actually underpin with ecological concerns in the province and help learners and teachers to contribute in sustainable developments.

## 6. Findings

The objective of the study integrates that an individual faculty member in the English department can take the initiative, but more is needed to cultivate harmonious relationship with physical environment and teaching practices through language. The board area of discussion concluded that advance teaching practices are vital to show compatibility between critical approach and environmental practices at higher level (Rickinson & Lundholm, 2008). The teacher's awareness is curial at this stage because it will help to implement the concrete practices of the subject, which is a great challenge for inculcating a sense of understanding among students and to shape their mental models that build new stories through their language proficiency for need of life they live. On the other hand, the teacher's perceptions about sustainability and growth are also an important concern because many teachers argue for a lack of skill-based trainings, which could be a positive step towards progressive teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom. Therefore, the English department's modern and qualified staff successfully ensures that students' learning and material could meet the demands of teaching techniques. With good involvement in the English classroom, a professional development model might grab the interest of the teachers and offer sufficient training (Özbilgin et al., 2016).

## 7. Conclusion

The creation of sustainable teaching strategies is becoming more and more popular in a range of educational settings. Numerous studies have examined how language use in the classroom shapes students' mental models and influences or inhibits sustainability (Damico et al. 2020). However, language pays attention to the integrity of ecosystems and tends to reflect positive change in learners nonetheless,

educators' knowledge and abilities look at how language use and students interact to oppose environmentally detrimental activities and support those that advance ecological justice and wellness in higher education. The sense of responsibility is on teachers to be aware of updated environmental issues and inculcate a dynamic meaning to complete interpretation of knowledge through language.

The finding of the study focused on communicative teaching methods broadly. It is suggested that teachers skills and creative learning strategies develop a sense of connection between human and physical world. Similarly, learning English to a certain extend not only stimulate students but also help teachers to reflect sustainable development in culture of teaching (Wang, 2019). In modern learning atmosphere the subjects are dealing as multi-disciplinary approaches therefore, it is suggested that HEC should focus on Women's University Quetta and give opportunities to the English department faculty to participate in workshops, trainings, and debates regarding these emerging trends and practices. Because a teacher is a role model and leader, her knowledge is considered more practical for students in the classroom; therefore, teacher training and updated knowledge in their own context are as important as subject objectives. Language courses should plan and combine various field trips and educational experiences with an environmental focus. Thus, it fosters a practical love of the natural world and improves language abilities.

Thus, the study shows that teachers and their approaches are more focused on language learning than on improving students' abilities, attitudes, and behaviors. English-language classrooms frequently overlook global issues like ecology and language use, despite the fact that implementing current learning methods is a top priority. More precisely, this study contributes to the conversation by bringing attention to the necessity for language teachers to integrate language and ecological into the classroom. It also suggests that teachers should narrate the language of stories during their lectures because it promote change and engage students to cherish their intrinsic vales of nature

and life. The study explicitly encourage teachers to endorse desirable stories with positive appraisal through use of language and its practices at higher level, as a result, it promotes sense of responsibility among students in a natural environment of learning.

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## **Appendix**

### Interview Questions

Single Session: 20 mins

#### **Part I**

1. Academic and professional qualifications
2. Which subject is you're most favorite? And why?
3. What is your teaching experiences? For how long you are in English department teaching undergraduate students

#### **Part II**

1. What is your perception about ecological concerns in any of text during your lecture?
2. How you teach any text that basically deals with natural environment? What comes in your mind when I utter words like Harmful/ pollution/ progress/ sustainability or any other?
3. Is there any childhood affiliation or story about ecofriendly attachments in your mind that you still remember teaching in your class?
4. Do you think that teaching stories help to shape human mind, social responsibilities to see nature as a resource?
5. How English language teachers should teach in their class and promote ecological perspectives and develop new stories for students?