

Eco-Lexicons in ELT: Analyzing Environmental Narratives through Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract. This study employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the environmental narratives presented in the chapter "Love Your Environment" from an English Language Teaching (ELT) textbook for Grade 11. Through a detailed linguistic analysis, the research focuses on the eco-lexicons, grammatical structures, and discursive strategies used to convey environmental ideologies. The study reveals that the chapter constructs a discourse of individual responsibility, primarily emphasizing personal actions like waste management and recycling while neglecting systemic factors such as corporate or governmental roles in environmental degradation. The use of evaluative adjectives, modal verbs, and passive constructions further reinforces a neoliberal environmental ideology that frames environmental problems as solvable through personal behavior. The findings suggest that while the textbook promotes environmental awareness, it limits students' understanding of the broader, interconnected nature of environmental issues, potentially impeding the development of critical ecological literacy. This research contributes to the growing field of ecolinguistics and highlights the need for ELT materials to adopt a more holistic and critical approach to environmental education.

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1. Introduction

In recent years, environmental education has become an increasingly vital component of curricula worldwide, driven by the urgent need to address environmental crises such as climate change, deforestation, and pollution. As young learners represent the next generation of decision-makers and environmental stewards, integrating environmental themes into educational materials is crucial for fostering ecological literacy. The incorporation of environmental narratives into English language teaching (ELT) through eco-lexicons—vocabulary and discourse related to ecological and environmental issues—is a significant step in promoting environmental awareness in educational contexts. This study aims to analyze the chapter titled "Love Your Environment" from a grade 10 English textbook, focusing on how environmental narratives are constructed and communicated through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

The relationship between language, power, and ideology lies at the core of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which aims to reveal the implicit messages and power structures embedded in texts. CDA provides a framework for analyzing how certain ideologies, such as environmentalism, are presented in language textbooks and how these ideologies may shape students' perceptions of the environment. In the context of this study, CDA will be used to examine the eco-lexicons and environmental narratives presented in the selected textbook chapter. Specifically, this research investigates how the language in the chapter reflects and constructs environmental discourses and the extent to which it fosters environmental awareness and activism among students.

1.2 Eco-Lexicons in Educational Contexts

Language plays a pivotal role in shaping how individuals perceive and interact with the world, and this is particularly true in the case of environmental discourse. According to Mühlhäusler [1], eco-lexicons serve as a tool for conveying environmental ideologies and values, embedding them within everyday language use. In educational contexts, the use of eco-lexicons can significantly influence students' understanding of environmental issues, helping them form connections between language, the environment, and their personal roles in addressing ecological challenges.

Research on eco-lexicons in education, particularly in ELT, has gained momentum in recent years. Studies have examined how environmental discourse is incorporated into educational materials, identifying how specific lexical choices promote or hinder the development of ecological literacy [2-3]. Goatly [2] suggests that the way language is used to describe nature and environmental phenomena can either reinforce harmful anthropocentric ideologies or promote a more sustainable, eco-centric worldview. Stibbe [3] further argues that critical ecolinguistics, which studies the connections between language and ecological issues, can provide valuable insights into how educational texts contribute to shaping students' environmental consciousness.

While these studies have laid the groundwork for understanding the role of eco-lexicons in education, much of the research focuses on general discourse analysis without considering the specific role that CDA can play in uncovering the power dynamics and ideologies embedded in these texts. This study addresses this gap by using CDA to critically examine the chapter "Love Your Environment," exploring how the textbook's language choices reflect broader environmental ideologies and contribute to the construction of environmental narratives in ELT.

1.3 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Environmental Narratives

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) offers a powerful tool for exploring how language perpetuates certain ideologies and power relations. According to Fairclough [4], CDA aims to reveal the underlying power structures in texts, focusing on how language can be used to maintain or challenge social inequalities. Van Dijk [5] similarly emphasizes the role of CDA in uncovering the ideological functions of language, particularly in institutional and educational contexts.

In the context of environmental discourse, CDA can be applied to examine how language choices in educational materials reflect, reinforce, or challenge dominant environmental ideologies. For instance, certain lexical choices may emphasize human dominance over nature, thus perpetuating anthropocentric views, while others may encourage a more harmonious relationship between humans and the environment. Studies by Clark [6] and Huckle and Wals [7] have shown that the way environmental narratives are constructed in textbooks can either promote environmental stewardship or contribute to eco-anxiety and disempowerment among students.

However, despite the growing body of research on CDA and environmental discourse, few studies have specifically focused on how CDA can be applied to analyze environmental narratives in ELT textbooks. This gap highlights the need for further investigation into how language education can be used as a tool for promoting ecological literacy and environmental activism. By analyzing the chapter "Love Your Environment," this study seeks to contribute to this emerging field by uncovering the ideologies and power relations embedded in the eco-lexicons and environmental narratives presented to students.

1.4 The Gap and the Need for This Study

Existing literature has provided valuable insights into the role of eco-lexicons and environmental discourse in shaping students' environmental awareness. However, there is a clear gap in research specifically focusing on how these discourses are constructed in ELT textbooks using the lens of CDA. Most studies have either explored general discourse analysis or have been limited to specific contexts, such as environmental science textbooks, leaving a gap in our understanding of how environmental narratives are framed in English language learning materials.

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of integrating environmental education into mainstream curricula, as the global health crisis is intricately linked with environmental degradation and unsustainable human activities. Yet, there has been little research on how environmental issues are addressed in educational materials

during this period. This study seeks to fill this gap by providing a critical analysis of environmental narratives in ELT textbooks, with a specific focus on eco-lexicons and their role in shaping students' perceptions of the environment.

By analyzing the chapter "Love Your Environment" through the lens of CDA, this research aims to uncover the ideologies and power structures embedded in the language of environmental education. This study also seeks to provide insights into how ELT materials can be improved to foster a more critical understanding of environmental issues among students, encouraging them to become active participants in addressing the ecological challenges of our time.

2 Material and Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach, using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyze the environmental narratives present in an English Language Teaching (ELT) textbook for Grade 11. Specifically, the chapter titled "Love Your Environment" will be critically examined to uncover the eco-lexicons and the underlying ideologies that inform students' perceptions of environmental issues. By adopting CDA, this research aims to explore how language is used to construct environmental discourse in ELT materials and to identify the power relations and ideologies embedded in these narratives.

The book under the investigation is *Bahasa Inggris: English for Change* for SMA/MA Grade XI, published by Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi (Pusat Perbukuan) in 2022 with ISBN 978-602-244-896-9 (complete edition) and ISBN 978-602-427-944-8 (edition 2). This book was authored by Puji Astuti, Aria Septi Anggaira, Atti Herawati, Yeyet Nurhayati, Dadan, and Dayang Suriani. This book uses Noto Serif 11/16pt., Steve Matteson xxii, contains 266 pages and 17.6 × 25 cm in size.

2.2 Research Design

The qualitative nature of this study allows for an in-depth exploration of the language used in educational materials, focusing on the ways in which eco-lexicons are incorporated into English language education. CDA is chosen as the analytical framework because of its ability to uncover hidden ideologies, power structures, and social dynamics within language [4]. In this context, CDA is particularly useful for examining how environmental narratives are constructed in a classroom setting and how these narratives may influence students' understanding of ecological issues.

2.3 Data Collection

The data for this study consist of a chapter from an English textbook used in Grade 10, titled "Love Your Environment." The textbook is part of the national curriculum for English Language Teaching and is designed for students aged 15 to 16. The selection of this specific chapter is based on its thematic focus on environmental issues, which aligns with the objective of analyzing eco-lexicons in ELT.

Additionally, secondary data sources, including academic journals, articles, and books on CDA and eco-lexicons in education, are used to support the analysis. These secondary sources provide a theoretical framework for understanding how eco-lexicons function within educational contexts and how CDA can reveal underlying ideologies in texts.

2.4 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

The methodological framework of this study is grounded in CDA, specifically the approach developed by Norman Fairclough [4], which focuses on the relationship between language, power, and ideology. According to Fairclough, CDA enables researchers to analyze how discourse is used to construct social realities and how power relations are reflected in language [4]. In this study, CDA is employed to examine the specific linguistic choices in the "Love Your Environment" chapter, particularly the use of eco-lexicons, to determine how environmental issues are framed. The analysis follows a three-dimensional model of CDA, which consists of textual analysis, discursive analysis and social practice.

Textual analysis involves a close examination of the language used in the chapter, focusing on specific eco-lexicons such as terms related to nature, pollution, conservation, and sustainability. The lexical choices, syntactic structures, and semantic patterns are analyzed to identify how environmental narratives are constructed. In the discursive practice, the study examines how the selected eco-lexicons function within the broader discourse of the textbook. This involves looking at how the text is produced and consumed within the classroom setting, considering the roles of both teachers and students in interpreting the environmental messages conveyed through the text [8]. While social practice explores the broader socio-political context in which the textbook was produced, considering how environmental ideologies may reflect the values and priorities of the curriculum designers and educational policymakers. This stage of the analysis focuses on how the discourse contributes to shaping students' perceptions of environmental issues and their roles as global citizens [5].

Through these three levels of analysis, this study aims to uncover how environmental ideologies are embedded in the language of the textbook and how these ideologies may influence students' ecological literacy and awareness.

2.5 Data Analysis

The analysis begins with a close reading of the "Love Your Environment" chapter to identify key eco-lexicons related to environmental discourse. These lexicons are categorized based on their thematic relevance to nature, environmental degradation, conservation, and sustainability. Following this, the text is coded to reveal recurring patterns in the use of these eco-lexicons, focusing on how they are framed within the broader context of the textbook.

Next, the study examines how the text positions the relationship between humans and nature, using CDA to identify whether the text promotes an anthropocentric or eco-centric worldview [2]. The analysis also investigates how power relations are constructed in the text, particularly in relation to who is presented as responsible for environmental protection—whether it is the individual, the community, or global institutions.

Finally, the study explores how the environmental narratives in the textbook align with or challenge dominant environmental ideologies, considering whether the text encourages students to adopt a critical, reflective stance toward environmental issues or whether it reinforces passive or superficial engagement with these topics [3].

2.6 Trustworthiness and Validity

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the study, the analysis is grounded in well-established CDA methodologies, particularly the work of Fairclough [4] and Van Dijk [5]. Furthermore, triangulation is employed by cross-referencing the findings from the textbook analysis with existing literature on eco-lexicons and environmental education, ensuring that the conclusions are supported by multiple data sources [9].

Additionally, peer debriefing is used to enhance the validity of the analysis, with findings discussed with experts in the field of discourse analysis and environmental education to ensure the robustness of the interpretations. This process helps to minimize researcher bias and strengthens the reliability of the study.

3 Results and Discussion

The chapter titled “Love Your Environment” serves as a platform for introducing environmental issues through language learning activities. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) allows for an exploration of the ideologies embedded in the language used and how these influence students' perceptions of environmental issues. By dissecting the eco-lexicons and narratives in this chapter, we can uncover the ways in which environmental discourse is constructed to promote specific attitudes toward waste management, ecological responsibility, and environmental awareness.

3.2 Textual Analysis

At the textual level, “Love Your Environment” employs a variety of eco-lexicons—terms specifically related to environmental issues such as “domestic waste,” “organized and unorganized waste,” “waste management,” “garbage in the ocean,” and “recyclable waste.” The chapter repeatedly emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between different types of waste and their proper management, framing waste as a central environmental issue.

The use of these eco-lexicons serves a didactic purpose, introducing students to specialized vocabulary related to environmentalism. The frequent repetition of terms like “waste” and “recycle” highlights their importance within the environmental narrative being constructed. By familiarizing students with this vocabulary, the text not only aims to enhance language proficiency but also seeks to raise awareness about the importance of responsible waste management.

One of the key lexical choices in this chapter is the distinction between “organized” and “unorganized” waste, which is explored in multiple activities. For example, students are asked to compare pictures of organized and unorganized waste and discuss the impact of unorganized waste on their surroundings (p. 47). This binary framing constructs a clear moral

dichotomy between good (organized) and bad (unorganized) environmental practices. By positioning "organized waste" as a desirable outcome, the text promotes the ideology of individual responsibility for waste management, reflecting neoliberal environmental discourses that prioritize personal action over systemic change [3].

The chapter also engages students in practical exercises related to waste management, such as designing posters to encourage others not to litter (p. 55). This activity aligns with the idea of individual action as the primary solution to environmental problems. The eco-lexicons used throughout the chapter, including terms like "reduce," "reuse," and "recycle," further reinforce this message by focusing on personal responsibility.

However, the chapter's use of eco-lexicons could be critiqued for its limited engagement with the broader, systemic causes of environmental degradation. The text does not address larger structural factors, such as corporate responsibility or government policies, which play a significant role in environmental issues. This omission reflects an anthropocentric view, where humans are positioned as both the problem and the solution to environmental challenges, without acknowledging the complexities of environmental systems [2]. By focusing on individual action, the text potentially oversimplifies the causes of environmental problems and the solutions needed to address them.

3.3 Discursive Practice

At the level of discursive practice, the chapter encourages students to engage with environmental issues through various interactive learning activities. For example, students are asked to work in groups to watch a video about waste in the ocean and reflect on what they see, smell, and hear (p. 54). This multimodal approach integrates listening, speaking, and writing activities, encouraging students to use their language skills to discuss environmental problems.

The use of eco-lexicons in these activities serves to normalize environmental discourse within the classroom. By incorporating terms related to waste management into everyday language exercises, the chapter helps students develop a familiarity with these concepts, making them more accessible and relatable. For instance, the activity where students describe the smell of waste or the sound of garbage trucks (p. 50) uses sensory experiences to bring abstract environmental issues into the students' immediate reality. This discursive practice reinforces the importance of ecological awareness and positions the environment as a key concern within the educational framework.

However, the chapter's focus on sensory descriptions of waste could also be seen as limiting. By emphasizing the immediate, sensory impacts of waste, the text risks reducing environmental issues to their most visible and tangible aspects, without addressing the less visible, long-term consequences of environmental degradation, such as climate change or biodiversity loss. This focus on the local and immediate mirrors broader trends in environmental education that prioritize personal experience over systemic analysis [6].

Additionally, the chapter encourages students to reflect on their personal behavior regarding waste, asking questions like, "Why did you trash?" and "How did you feel when you see people trashing?" (p. 53). This reflection exercise further reinforces the neoliberal discourse

of individual responsibility by framing environmental degradation as a result of personal choices. While self-reflection is a valuable tool for fostering environmental consciousness, it risks placing undue emphasis on individual actions while neglecting the role of larger social and economic systems in creating environmental problems [4].

3.4 Social Practice

At the level of social practice, the chapter reflects broader societal ideologies about environmentalism and sustainability. The focus on waste management, for instance, mirrors global environmental discourses that prioritize reducing waste as a key solution to environmental degradation. This is evident in the chapter's repeated emphasis on recycling and responsible waste disposal as primary strategies for protecting the environment.

However, the chapter's focus on waste management also reflects the dominant neoliberal ideology that frames environmental problems as issues that can be solved through individual action. This ideology is widespread in environmental education, where students are often taught that personal choices, such as recycling or reducing plastic use, are the most effective ways to combat environmental issues [7]. While these actions are important, this discourse can obscure the need for systemic changes, such as stronger environmental regulations or corporate accountability.

The text's emphasis on personal responsibility is also evident in its treatment of waste as a moral issue. By asking students to reflect on their own waste disposal habits and to design posters encouraging others not to litter, the text frames environmental responsibility as a matter of personal ethics. This aligns with broader societal trends that emphasize individual moral responsibility for environmental stewardship, rather than collective action or political advocacy [3].

Moreover, the chapter's exclusion of discussions about larger environmental issues, such as climate change or deforestation, suggests a limited view of environmentalism. By focusing narrowly on waste management, the text risks neglecting the broader, interconnected nature of environmental problems. This reflects a wider trend in environmental education, where complex issues are often simplified to make them more manageable for students, but at the cost of reducing their understanding of the full scope of environmental challenges [2].

3.5 Language Analysis

3.5.1 Textual Analysis: Lexical Choices and Eco-Lexicons

A hallmark of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is examining the vocabulary or lexical choices used in the text [10-15]. In this chapter, specific eco-lexicons—terms related to environmental topics—play a central role in constructing the environmental narrative. Repeated terms like "domestic waste," "organized waste," "unorganized waste," "garbage in the ocean," "waste management," and "recyclable waste" appear throughout the activities, emphasizing waste as a critical environmental issue.

The language surrounding waste is organized to contrast "organized" and "unorganized" waste. For instance, in Activity 2 (p. 47), students are asked to compare images of organized and unorganized waste and reflect on the impacts of unorganized waste on their surroundings.

The adjectives "organized" and "unorganized" are value-laden, framing responsible waste management as "organized" (and thus positive) and poor waste management as "unorganized" (negative). This binary distinction reinforces a moral discourse that ties cleanliness and order to environmental responsibility. According to Goatly [2] such eco-lexicons are not neutral but reflect anthropocentric ideologies, where humans are positioned as stewards of nature whose responsibility is to maintain order in their environment.

Similarly, the adjective phrases used to describe waste are crucial in shaping perceptions. For example, "clean blue ocean," "awful dirty scenery," and "big trash bin" (p. 57) are constructed with evaluative adjectives ("clean," "awful," "big") that influence how students judge environmental conditions. The juxtaposition of positive and negative adjectives not only guides students' emotional responses to environmental issues but also frames certain environmental behaviors as either commendable or condemnable. For instance, "clean blue ocean" is associated with positive adjectives that connote beauty and cleanliness, while "awful dirty scenery" carries negative connotations, positioning environmental degradation as something distasteful and undesirable.

Moreover, in the discussion of domestic waste in the chapter, terms like "recycle" and "reduce" are prominent, drawing attention to individual actions for managing waste (p. 48). The framing of these terms positions waste management as a personal responsibility rather than a collective or structural issue. This reflects what Fairclough [4] describes as neoliberal discourse, where the burden of solving environmental issues is placed on the individual rather than addressing larger societal or corporate factors. The lexical choices thus shape a discourse of individual responsibility that may obscure the need for systemic or institutional interventions in environmental crises.

3.5.2 *Grammatical Structures and Agency*

Another critical aspect of CDA involves examining the grammatical structures used to see how agency is assigned in the text [10-16]. In "Love Your Environment," much of the text uses imperative sentences, such as in Activity 2: "Compare these two pictures. Which one is organized and which one is unorganized?" and "Take note and focus on the following questions" (p. 47). The imperative form directs students to engage with the material in a particular way, implicitly suggesting that the responsibility for recognizing and addressing environmental issues lies with them. This positioning of students as active agents is reinforced through instructions that require them to reflect on their behavior regarding waste disposal.

However, despite the active engagement required by students in these activities, the passive voice is used when describing environmental damage, especially when discussing waste problems. For example, the text states, "People are littering or throwing trash in public places because of some reasons" (p. 53). The passive construction of the phrase shifts focus away from specific actors responsible for the littering and instead generalizes the issue, making it seem as though littering is a widespread and inevitable behavior rather than one perpetuated by specific individuals or groups. This passivization is a common linguistic strategy in environmental discourse that downplays responsibility and dilutes accountability [3]. By failing to specify who is responsible for environmental damage, the text avoids critical engagement with power relations that contribute to environmental degradation.

Moreover, the text frequently uses third-person constructions such as "People are littering" and "People are using plastic bags for some reasons" (p. 69). This generalization of "people" avoids direct confrontation with the reader, which might otherwise evoke a stronger sense of responsibility or guilt. Instead of saying, "You are littering," the text distances the reader from the problem, allowing for a more passive interpretation of the environmental crisis.

3.5.3 *The Role of Modality*

Modality—the use of modal verbs to express possibility, necessity, or obligation—also plays a critical role in shaping the discourse. The chapter uses modals of obligation (must, should) and modals of possibility (can, could) to frame environmental action. For instance, when students are prompted to reflect on their personal habits, the text says, "What can you do as a person to keep your environment clean?" (p. 61). The use of "can" here suggests that students have the capacity to act but stops short of compelling them to take action. Similarly, in the activity where students design posters to discourage littering, the imperative "don't forget to use five senses and adjective clauses" (p. 55) reflects a more direct call to action, signaling that students should take specific steps to address waste problems in their communities.

While the modals of possibility suggest that individual action is within reach, the absence of stronger modals of obligation (like "must" or "have to") weakens the urgency of addressing environmental crises. This reflects broader trends in environmental education, where students are encouraged to engage with environmental issues but are not necessarily positioned as agents of critical change [7]. The soft modal language thus frames environmental action as optional rather than imperative, potentially undermining the development of a more assertive environmental consciousness.

Conclusions are written briefly, concisely, and clearly in one paragraph, which is a summary of the results and discussion (what arguments/claims can you propose?), answers from the objectives of the research/publication (How do the arguments/claims address the research objective or answer the research question?) and further research (What are the implications of the study? [theoretical, methodological, or practical implications]). Emphasis on the novelty of discovery or development. If there are suggestions for future research can be delivered briefly and clearly at the end of a paragraph.

4 Conclusion

The chapter "Love Your Environment" from the English Language Teaching (ELT) textbook Bahasa Inggris: English for Change for SMA/MA Kelas XI constructs environmental discourse primarily through the lens of individual responsibility for waste management. While the chapter introduces important eco-lexicons related to waste and recycling, it reflects a neoliberal environmental ideology that emphasizes personal action over systemic change. By focusing on waste management as the central environmental issue, the text simplifies the broader complexities of environmental degradation and risks overlooking the importance of collective action and structural reforms.

Through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this study has revealed that while the chapter promotes environmental awareness, it does so in a way that aligns with dominant societal discourses about individual responsibility. It is also found out that the chapter uses a variety of linguistic strategies—including eco-lexicons, grammatical structures, and modality—to construct a discourse of individual responsibility for environmental issues. Future iterations of ELT materials could benefit from a more holistic approach to environmental education, one that incorporates discussions about systemic causes of environmental issues and encourages students to engage in collective action alongside individual efforts.

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