International Journal of Enhanced Research in Educational Development, IJERED,
ISSN: 2320-8708, Vol. 13 Issue 4, July.-August, 2025

English Language Education in facilitating Cross Cultural Perspectives on Global Environmental Issues

Jijitha Gilton[1], Ana Liliana Espitia[2], Dr. Divya C. Senan[3]

[1]Research Scholar, Department of Education, University of Kerala
[2]ICCR Doctoral Scholar, Department of Education, University of Kerala
[3]Assistant Professor, Department of Education, University of Kerala

ABSTRACT

In an era of rapid changes and developments, the interconnectedness between human society and environment has become more apparent than ever. This ever-increasing pace of interconnectedness have sometimes led humans to be immaturely greed for being in the state of 'developed'. Three of the top five long-term hazards in the Global Risk Perception study are environmental for the first time ever (Rahman et.al., 2023) and this reveals intensity of the peril. The situation gives rise to be in an urgent need of collaborative efforts transcending national and cultural boundaries to sustainably deal with the global environmental challenges. A cross-cultural perspective is of great benefit to the understanding of human–environment interactions (Tam & Milfont, 2020) and thereby is a necessary element in developing sustainable environmental means. This paper explores the role of environment concerning content in English language education to enhance students understanding of complex ecological concerns and their interplay with cultural contexts. The study that proceeds through qualitative analysis explores eminent potential of English language education in transcending linguistic barriers and serving as a catalyst for the exchange of ideas and information related to global environmental concerns.

Key terms: English Language Education, Cross Cultural Perspectives, Global Environmental Issues, sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

The environmental challenges faced today, from climate change and biodiversity loss to resource depletion and pollution, is at an urging situation to be dealt sustainably. As global concerns, environmental issues transcend borders, affecting people from diverse cultural backgrounds and thereby demand coordinated international efforts. Delving into various environmental challenges and their global effects has become a trending area of discussions and researches, while the influence of cultural perspectives -how societies perceive, respond to, and address these issues is at a sore need to be attended deeply and curiously. However, addressing these issues is often complicated by linguistic and cultural barriers that hinder effective communication and cooperation among nations. English, as the lingua franca of the modern world, plays a crucial role in overcoming these barriers, allowing individuals and communities from different backgrounds to engage in meaningful discussions and work towards sustainable solutions.

The factors in the environment that prevent people from achieving their goals for health and pleasure are known as environmental problems (James & Stapp, 1974, as cited by Ninuk, 2014). Immature actions of human greediness which led and continuing to be a cause for the current and decades felt environmental issues, arise out of the yearning to meet both individual and societal requirements. This makes the referred concern not to be confined by geographical boundaries, rather a shared concern for humanity. Many of the people who view the development of human society as an ongoing process fail to recognize the significance that environmental deterioration has played upon the swap that acts on the whole world (Harper & Snowden,2017). Enlightenment that the concerned issues have far-reaching consequences which severely affect ecosystems, economies, and societies worldwide, makes the situation more required on, to recognize the significant influence of cultural perspectives on environmental awareness, behaviors, and solutions. Awareness and education on environment and the faced issues open on to a change in behavior and attitude of the targeted. Exploring the intersection of environmental issues and cross-cultural perspectives throw lights upon the role of culture in shaping environmental

attitudes and actions and its cavernous influence on developing more effective strategies for addressing these pressing global concerns.

Being the accepted Global language, English language education serves as a catalyst for cross-cultural perspectives, helping unite people from diverse backgrounds in their quest to address the urgent environmental challenges encountered by our planet. Examining the role of English language education in the process of empowering individuals to participate actively in cross-cultural dialogues and environmental initiatives, fostering a sense of global citizenship and shared responsibility. Culture is the total learned way of life (Harper & Snowden, 2017), influencing each criteria appertaining the intrusion made by humans at the hand of so called 'developments. These influences thereby differ according to the differences possessed by various cultures across the world. Here arises the impacted presence of cross-cultural perspective on environmental issues. The significant challenges possessed by the environmental discrepancies across the world, necessitates the inculcation of cross-cultural perspectives on environmental issues on global basis in education, the appropriately assigned powerful weapon to change the world. Education as a unique investment not only for present but also for the future (NPE,1986) is bound to bring necessary changes to the environmental discrepancies across the world as in any case. Textbooks, the deemed authoritative fount of education regarded information, is an effective source of scientific findings on societal and environmental changes and the growth of knowledge (Martin, 2023). The crucial role of textbooks in educating and thereby promoting behavioural changes and coping flexibility among students in the classroom settings is inevitably relevant.

FOCUS OF THE RESEARCH

With an aim to inspire educators, policymakers, and learners to recognize the pivotal role of language in building a more sustainable and inclusive global community, the present paper tries to analyse and compare the English education offered by State Board of Education, Govt. of Kerala, India and Secretary of Education, Bogota, Colombia. The paper analyses the educational systems with special reference to the cross-cultural perspectives on global environmental issues through English language education. The study focuses upon the elements of global environmental issues embedded in the English language curriculum offered in Kerala, India and Bogota, Colombia.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Kerala has a literacy rate of 93.9% compared to the national literacy rate which is 74.0% (census, 2011). Still the state is under various discrepancies regarding environmental as well as social issues. One among the serious issues faced by the state today is ecological degradation and the major suggested solution for developing the state is to work towards a strong knowledge economy (Kareepadath, 2018). At the point of various setbacks, the question of what the content of curriculum should be gains the ground. (SCERT, 2007). The need for a content-oriented method of teaching or rather content based instructions (CBI) is at an urge at the present situation. Content-based instruction (CBI) is accepted and respected for its commitment to both language learning, and content learning (Hauschild, 2012). The paper intends to analyse the environmental education provided through English language education under four criteria which are as follows:

- Content
- Learning outcome
- Teaching methods
- Evaluation

Environmental issues as content knowledge

While countless themes meet the requirements to be included in language learning, environmental issues hit the spot as the most critical globally affecting issue. Awareness on the environmental issues leads to the strengthening of worlds human population awareness and concerns on the total environment – its conditions, problems and strategies for sustainable remedies and developments (Ninuk,2015). While the population growth and environmental issues are interconnected, the very rapid population growth results in the swift raise of both individual and social needs too. Here arises issues on environment on account of humans and their unscientific pursual towards development and thereby environmental education. environmental education is an attempt to change the behavior and the attitude performed by various parties or elements of society that aims at improving the knowledge, skills and awareness of the society concerning the environmental values and environmental problems issues, which in turn can drive the community to play an active role in the preservation and safety of the environment for the benefit of present and future generations (Ninuk,2015). Providing this education on environment through English language education extends the acceptance of the mentioned behavioural change as English being a global language and language being the centrality of communication.

Environmental education through English language learning

English language teaching remains unsuccessful if the learners lack social conscience and are uninformed of global issues, using their communication abilities for global crime, exploitation, oppression, or environmental destruction, even though being fluent in the language (Vaselinovska, 2012). As a communication tool, language bears the responsibility in imparting content knowledge. When it comes in the case of English, the lingua franca, this responsibility becomes even more intensive. This makes English language education the best way for providing environmental education.

Objectives Of The Study

To analyze the specific content related to global environmental issues in the English language education textbooks of the Kerala State Board of Education.

To analyze the specific content related to global environmental issues in the English language education textbooks of Secretary of Education in Bogota.

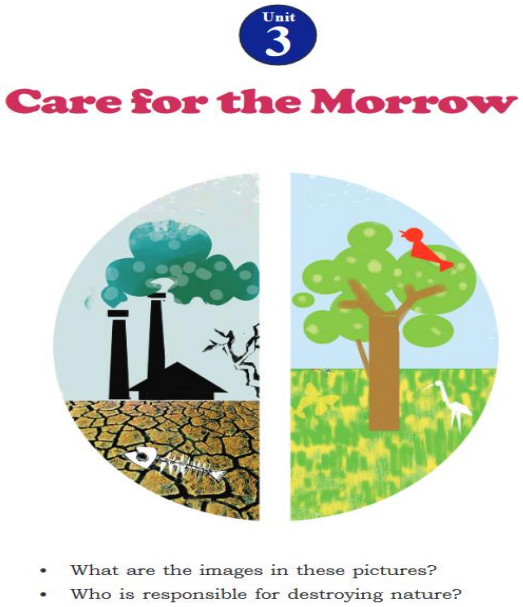
METHODOLOGY

The method adopted for the qualitative research is document analysis and interview. The English language education textbooks of Kerala State Board Education and Secretary of Education in Bogota in High School Grade are studied and the finding are recorded. The analysis is being done on the basis of four criteria- content, learning objectives, teaching methodology and also evaluation process.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Analysis of English Textbooks from the Kerala State Board of Education

English textbooks of Kerala State Board of Education are arranged in such a way that the lessons are divided and put in order on the basis of unit themes. Syllabus of a particular grade is being organized into five units in which each unit is encompassed of literature works of different genre but of similar theme. Out of the analysis of the English textbooks assigned for high school education, the researcher found two units of the IXth grade textbook dealing with the theme concerning environmental issues. Unit III which is titled as 'Care for the Morrow' is based on the main theme 'preservation of nature' and subthemes environmental issues, natural phenomena and natural calamities (SCERT Teachers text,2019) which are inculcated through the lessons which are of various literature genres. The unit that begins with a picture to be analyzed, clearly reflects the environmental concerns behind the integration of such a unit in the English language education



Taken from Kerala Reader English std. IX. (2017).

Figure 1: ***Opening of Unit III in Kerala SCERT English textbook of Std IX***

Two contrasting images included in the above figure throws light upon what the immature development behavioural tendencies of humans have resulted on. It also flashes a ray of hope as the sustainable developmental measures that can change the destroyed world to be more beautiful than before. The incorporated lesson is arranged in a particular manner which in course gores along from beauty of nature, its disruption by man in the form of developments, reaction of nature and then the need for sustainable remedies.

First lesson, Song of the Rain is a beautiful poem by Khalil Gibran, through which beauty of the nature is well explained. Meanwhile the second lesson, Listen to the Mountains, a drama by Kaveri Nambisan, an Indian author reflects her concerns about the exploiting nature of humans which affects the stability of the whole ecosystem. The lesson also raises a question whether humans are not responsible to save their mother earth. The third lesson which is a speech delivered at the UN Climate Summit by Leonardo DiCaprio titled as "Climate change is not hysteria -it's a fact". The lesson is an eyeopener towards the atrocities against environment.

Unit IV of the IXth grade textbook titled as 'Dawn of Hope' is another unit which deals with the theme concerning environmental issues. Out of the three chapters included in the unit, two are based on environmental issues. First lesson which is the survival tale of Juliane Koepcke, a sixteen-year-old girl, demonstrates the unrivalled power of the human mind, the courage to overcome any obstacles, and the determination to succeed a risky scenario. Even though the story is that of the survival from an air crash, the activities included in the lesson contains different environmental disasters which occurred due to the greedy and unsustainable nature of humans towards development. It also provokes the students to think of possible sustainable resilience methods to deal with such situations.

Second lesson in unit IV is On Killing A Tree, a poem written by Gieve Patel, an Indian poet who is a part of "Green Movement" which is involved in an effort to protect the environment. The poem exposes man's cruelty to nature, the ultimate reason behind all the environmental issues faced by the world today.

Analysis of the content

Class	Unit	Lesson	content	Activities reflecting environmental concerns
Std IX	III	I- Song of the Rain	Beauty of nature	Collect some poems or songs in English/your mother tongue which give us feeling or images of rain. Recite/sing one of the poems/songs in the class.
		II- Listen to the Mountains	Atrocities against nature as in the form of developments	**Activity 1**: Pick out the sentences showing the concern of Ramanna and Shastri about Dharmagiri. Is their concern reasonable? **Activity 2**: Grandmother and the young villagers represent two generations. What difference do you find in their attitudes towards ecological issues? Pick out the expressions that justify your answer **Activity 3**: "Finally the mountain spoke loud enough for everyone to hear. Nature always speaks if we care to listen." How did Nature speak? Prepare a conversation between you and Nature. Role plays it in your class. **Activity 4:** You might have noticed land levelling in your locality. Are you aware of the environmental hazards it may cause? Collect details from various sources and prepare an e-mail to be sent to the Minister for Environment, complaining about the issue. **Activity 5:** Collect pictures, poems, stories, news, etc. about man-made hazards. Write suitable captions and footnotes. Prepare a class magazine.
		III- Climate Change is not histeria – It's a fact	Deals with the reaction of nature to the intrusion of human activities Need to prefer sustainable remedies and	**Activity 1:** Prepare a few posters to make people aware of the necessity for preserving nature and protecting the environment. **Activity 2**: Prepare a welcome speech for the ecology club inauguration in your school.

			development strategies	
	IV	I- The Jungle Crash	Survival from disasters which includes environmental disasters also	While Kerala was facing the flood disaster, the fishermen proved to be real heroes rescuing many lives a) List the various factors that helped the fishermen to become the saviours of flood victims. • Ability to ride boats • Swimming skill • …… • ……. b) The empathetic attitude of the fishermen saved many lives. Prepare a write up on the topic 'Kerala Disaster Relief - Rise of the sons of the sea as superheroes in the ocean of humanity.' c) National Disaster Management Authority is conducting a 'webinar' on the topic "How to Stay Safe from Natural Disasters" Based on the points listed, prepare a paper for the webinar
		II- On Killing a Tree	Need of protecting nature	What do you understand from the title "On Killing a Tree"? Justify the title in your own words.

Analysis of Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes (LOs) outline what students are expected to understand and the ways to meet curriculum goals through the suggested pedagogical procedures (Learning Outcomes, NCERT). The learning outcomes recommended by the Kerala State Board of education for the IX th grade also includes content outcomes with equal importance to literary outcomes (SCERT Teachers text,2019). The unit learning outcomes of unit III and IV dealing with the theme of environmental issues are incorporated with outcomes mentioning the awareness on environmental destructions and also to respond against the same in a sustainable manner.

Analysis of teaching methods

The teaching method insisted to be followed by the SCERT, activity-oriented method (SCERT Teachers text,2019) is very much capable in inculcating environmental values in students. Lesson based activities provided in the textbooks are aiming at enhancing both language skills and content knowledge of the students.

Analysis of evaluation process

When it comes to the evaluation a continuous and comprehensive evaluation system (CCE) which is categorized as continuous evaluation (CE) and term evaluation (TE) is endorsed by the Kerala State Board of education. While the continuous evaluation is through unit-based assessment, term evaluation is discourse based evaluation. The discourse-based evaluation system concentrates mainly upon assessing the language skills and the content knowledge which is given importance in the learning outcome is being in a neglected state in evaluation process. This system makes it difficult to assess whether students have developed any awareness towards environmental discrepancies.

The study reveals that the content, learning outcome and teaching methodology incorporates knowledge on environment, its discrepancies and need for sustainable remedies. But the evaluation procedure which is purely discourse oriented is not giving importance to assess the inculcated knowledge upon environment.

Analysis of English Textbooks from SED Secretary of Education, Bogotá, Colombia

General Context:

In Colombia, Ministry of National Education MEN still continue doing efforts to offer a high-quality bilingual education. There are important plans regulated by government laws to improve the bilingual activities in high schools: "National English Program 2015-2025" (Colombia, MEN, 2014). Programa Nacional de Bilinguismo in Spanish and the policy called "Project to strengthen the development of competencies in foreign languages (2010-2014)" (Colombia, MEN 2013) "Proyecto de fortalecimiento de las competencias en idiomas extranjeros" (Ospina, 2019).

In the same way, according to Hurtado (2021) "Basic Competence Standards in foreign languages: English" (Colombia, MEN 2006) "Estándares Básicos de Competencia en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés" in Spanish, adopted the levels of the Common European Framework to be developed for each Colombian educational level and framed the importance of communication between foreign languages and cultures. This author Fraga (2021) affirms:

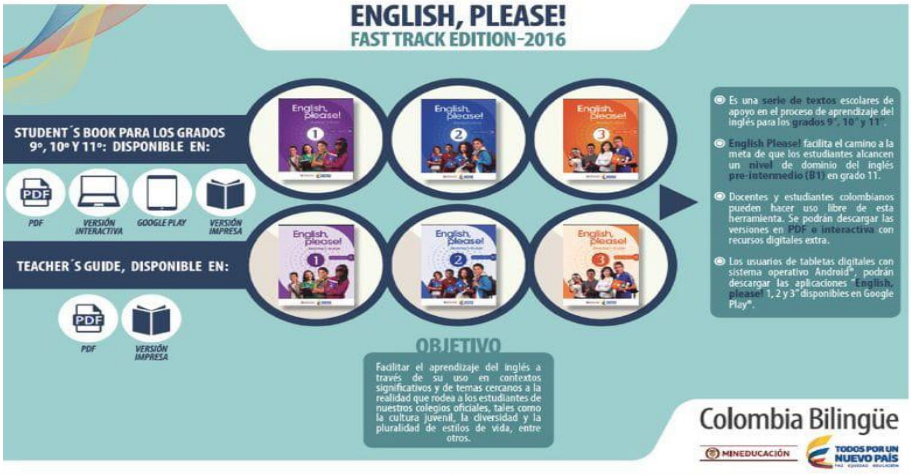
> *The Common European Framework of Reference (henceforth, CEFR) was developed by the European Council with the intention of providing a comprehensive and transparent basis for the creation and design of language syllabi and curriculum guidelines, together with the design of teaching and learning textbooks, worksheets, tasks and, in short, teaching materials, and the assessment of the foreign language competence. (p. 195)*

In Bogotá, the capital of Colombia, an English teacher Pérez (2022) expressed "Bilingualism in public schools in Bogotá is a titanic task that the city undertook almost 15 years ago, starting of the creation of the Bilingualism Law (Law 1651 of 2013)" (p.17). Also, in her article in a Colombian magazine she claimed that after this law, with the creation of the "District Bilingualism Plan", "Plan Distrital de Bilinguismo" in Spanish, many educational institutions like Universidad Pedagógica, Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Universidad Nacional de Colombia and allied entities such as The British Council, SENA, and Instituto Colombo Americano started helping and support the bilingual process in public schools. (Pérez, 2022).

In 2016, MEN Colombia presented a book titled "Designing a proposal of English Suggested Curriculum (ESC) in Colombia" for grades 6th to 11th with slogan "English for diversity and equity". After that, many English books were delivered without any cost to different public schools, two series "Way to Go" for 6th, 7th and 8th grades and "English please" for 9th, 10th and 11th grade.

https://rutamaestra.santillana.com.co/igualdad-de-oportunidades-en-colegios-oficiales/

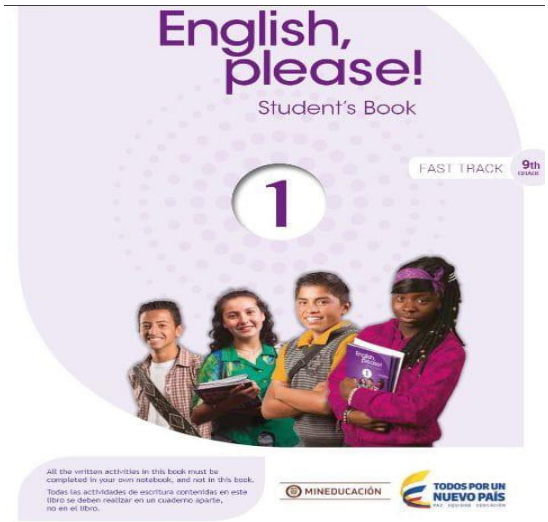
Figure 2: ***Picture English text books for Colombia grades 6th, 7th and 8th***



https://rutamaestra.santillana.com.co/textos-escolares-para-aprender-ingles-y-fomentar-la-colombianidad-en-colegios-oficiales-del-pais/

Figure 3: ***Picture English text books for Colombia 9th, 10th, 11th grades***

Analysis of the content



https://www.docdroid.net/dYYnlvg/english-please-1-student-pdf

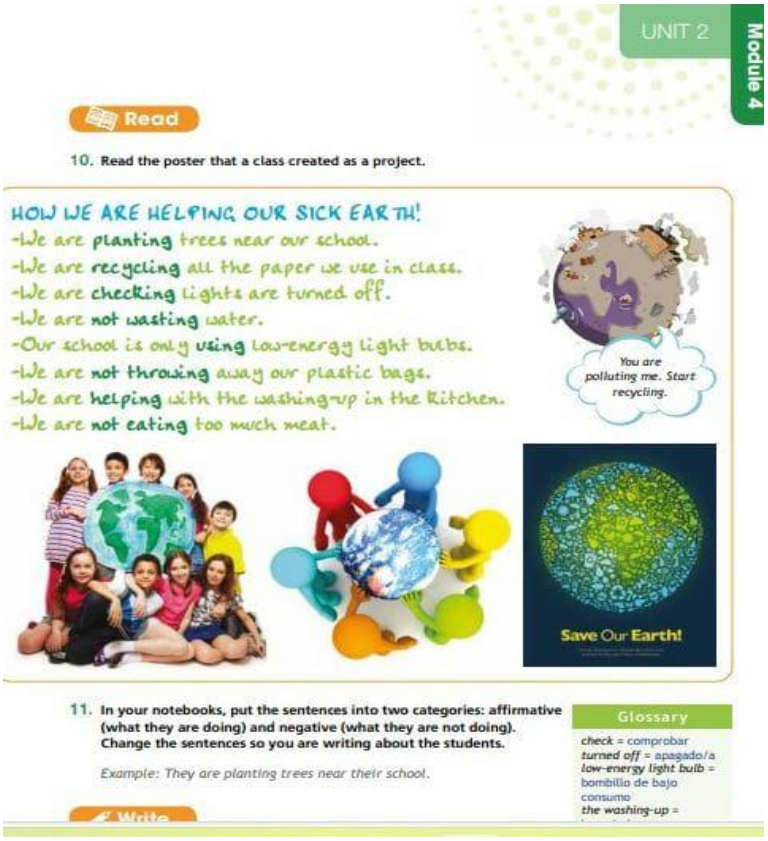
Figure 4: ***Picture First page, book cover English Please! Serie, Student´s book, 9th grade Colombia***

Class	Module	3 Units	Content
9th Grade	N.4 Protect the Earth	8 lessons	Activities designed on the four main communication skills: Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking. Activities focused on language and Vocabulary.
			Topics: Geographical features, flora and fauna in the world, environmental problems, natural disasters, changes in cities and ways to help the environment and take care of the environment.
			Project: "Let´s work together" final activity in the module. Self-assessment about English language skills.

https://www.docdroid.net/dYYnlvg/english-please-1-student-pdf

Figure 5 : ***Picture Content Module 4 English Please! Serie, Student´s book, 9th grade Colombia***

Analysis of Learning outcome:
In this module, there are three main objectives:
Unit 1 The world we live: To learn about geographical features, flora and fauna in the world
Unit 2 Problems and solutions: To identify environmental problems, natural disasters and being
Unit 3 Changes to make 'green': To analyze changes in our cities and look at ways to help the environment.
These learning objectives involved the communication skills and present a way to include environmental issues in language functions for learning English as a foreign language related with current themes in the world.
The objectives also are established from the basic standards of learning English as foreign language for ninth grade, from ESC English Suggested Curriculum and Colombian law about syllabus in public schools.



https://www.docdroid.net/dYYnlvg/english-please-1-student-pdf

Figure 6: ***Picture Example of activity Module 4 English Please! Serie, Student´s book, 9th grade, Colombia***

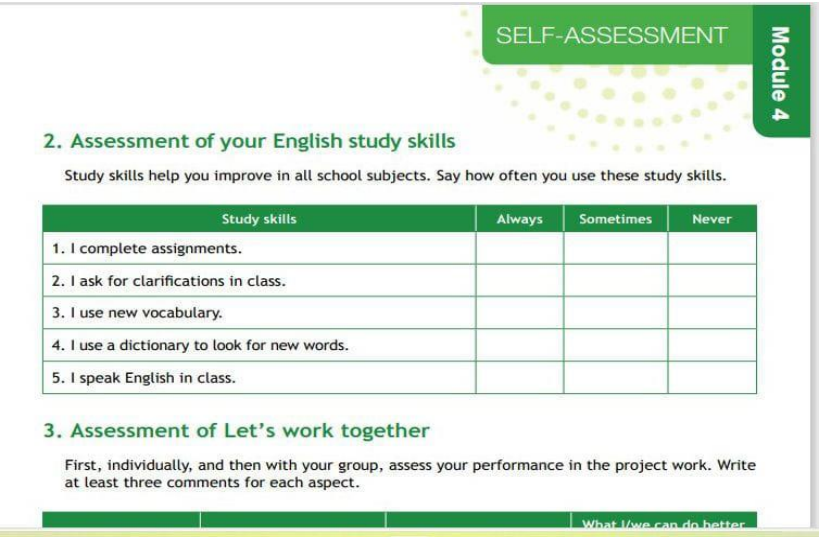
Analysis of teaching methods
In Colombia, all teachers have freedom of cathedra, it means that every teacher can adopt the best teaching methodology to consider the best proposal for students' context and reality. However, it is mandatory to follow the Colombian laws and education policies. When an English teacher is using, working a text book in classroom, can adapt the activities according to students need and interests. In the case of this book "English please!" one of the most appropriate methodologies for teaching could be: CLT - Communicative Language Teaching (The Communicative Approach).

One of the main goals or purposes of learning a language is get a good level of proficiency to be able to communicative using the four main skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. Applying the communicative approach, it is possible to create good classroom activities to promote the correct use of language in topics related with environment issues. Moreover, it is an urgent need to contribute to the student's awareness about the relevance or taking care of the planet and to have an ethical ecological mind and behavior.

https://www.docdroid.net/dYYnlvg/english-please-1-student-pdf

Figure 7: ***Picture Four communicative skills Module 4 English Please! Serie, Student´s book, 9th grade Colombia***

Analysis of evaluation process



https://www.docdroid.net/dYYnlvg/english-please-1-student-pdf

Figure 8: ***Picture Self-assessment example Module 4 English Please! Serie, Student´s book, 9th grade Colombia***

Depending on the teaching-learning process, an English teacher can apply different kind of evaluations. Self-assessment is the beginning to promote in students the honesty to recognise their own learning process and how they can achieve their goals, checking their own process not only for getting a mark or score but for getting honest English knowledge. Evaluation in pairs, it is also another good way to contribute to interactions between students using their communicative skills, helping others to check goods and mistakes, promoting human values like respect and responsibility. "Co-evaluation" a general evaluation between all students or a whole group could be a positive manner to check in general the progress of the group

and how general activities could help to improve the learning process with innovation in classroom. Finally, English teachers are free to adopt and adapt any methodology which can innovate about new ways of evaluation without forgetting evaluate about axiology: human values, performance, responsibility, student motivation, behavior including environmental awareness, participation and about epistemology: English knowledge and proficiency.

CONCLUSION

Importance to sustainable ways of dealing with the environment has become the need of the hour, irrespective of social economic or geographical concerns. The importance given to environmental issues in English language education by various educational systems across the world is a progress towards a more sustainable world. However, it is still in need of more concentration upon making the educational system more flexible in terms of teaching methods and evaluation process. Also providing more professional opportunities for teachers to make them well equipped will also serve as a catalyst in molding a sustainability-oriented future.

REFERENCES

[1] English Teacher text std. IX. (2019). *State Council of Educational Research and Training.*

[2] Fraga Viñas, L. (2021). Implementation of the CEFR in the rubrics of two main English Certificates: Cambridge FCE and Trinity ISE-II. *El Guiniguada*. https://accedacris.ulpgc.es/handle/10553/110266

[3] Harper, Charles L. & Snowden, Monica. (2017). Environment and Society: Human Perspectives on Environmental Issues. *ResearchGate*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318827333_Environment_and_Society_Human_Perspectives_on_Environmental_Issues

[4] Hurtado Marin, J. F. (2021). Documentary analysis of the Educ, MEN ation Sector Plans in relation to basic and secondary bilingual education (Spanish-English) in Bogotá in the period from 2004 to 2020. http://upnblib.pedagogica.edu.co/handle/20.500.12209/16771.

[5] Kerala Reader English std. VII. (2017). *State Council of Educational Research and Training.*

[6] Kerala Reader English std. IX. (2017). *State Council of Educational Research and Training.*

[7] Kerala Reader English std. X. (2017). *State Council of Educational Research and Training.*

[8] Martin, Divya et.al. (2023). A review of Topics on Climate Change in the School Textbooks. *Climate Action through Climate Change education.*

[9] Ministerio de Educación Nacional, MEN Colombia (2016) *English Please! 1 Fast track 9th grade* Editorial Richmond Colombia https://www.docdroid.net/dYYnlvg/english-please-1-student-pdf

[10] Ministerio de Educación Nacional, MEN Colombia (2021). *Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo: Colombia Logros 2020-2021* http://educacionrindecuentas.mineducacion.gov.co/pilar-1-educacion-de-calidad/programa-nacional-de-bilinguismo

[11] Ospina, N. S. (2019). Colombian English Teachers' Stories and Experiences in the National Bilingualism Program: Three Portraits that Shape Their Professional Development Journeys. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, *25*(1), 115-135.

[12] Pérez, P. Y. V. (2022). Bilingüismo y educación pública. Más que un sueño, una realidad. Magazine: *Aula Urbana*, (125), 16-18.

[13] Ruta Maestra (2017) *English Text Books Way to Go, (grades 6th, 7th, 8th)* Edition 21, Special MEN Ministry of National Education, Colombia. https://rutamaestra.santillana.com.co/igualdad-de-oportunidades-en-colegios-oficiales/

[14] Ruta Maestra (2016) *Text Books to learn English and foment Colombian identity in public schools* Edition 16, Special MEN Ministry of National Education, Colombia. https://rutamaestra.santillana.com.co/textos-escolares-para-aprender-ingles-y-fomentar-la-colombianidad-en-colegios-oficiales-del-pais/

[15] Tam, Kim-Pong & Milfont, Taciano L. (2020). Towards cross-cultural environmental psychology: A state-of-the-art review and recommendations. *Journal of Environmental Psychology(71).* https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2020.101474

[16] Ur Rahman, S. et al. (2023). Cross-cultural perspective on sustainable consumption: implications for consumer motivations and promotion. *Environ Dev Sustain.* https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-021-02059-8