

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This first chapter serves as an introduction to the study, including the background of the research, research question, research purposes, research scope, and research significance. The research background explains the context and focus of the study. The research question outlines the specific objectives of the research. The research purposes describe the main objectives of the study. The research scope sets the limitations of the research. The research significance highlights the potential contributions of the research. Lastly, the definition of key terms clarifies the important concepts used in the study to avoid misunderstanding and ensure a common understanding of the research focus.

1.1 Background of the Research

Ecocentric education is grounded in critical theory, drawing on the ideas of Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, and Paulo Freire, as well as ecological pedagogy developed by Richard Kahn (Kopnina, 2020). These scholars emphasized that education functions not only as a process of knowledge transmission but also as a powerful means of shaping values and worldviews. Within industrial capitalist societies, education has often contributed to the internalization of alienation from both humanity and nature, reinforcing dominant ideologies that prioritize consumerism, economic growth, and technocratically defined progress over ecological balance (Kopnina, 2020).

Ecocentric challenges this dominant orientation by proposing an ethical shift that recognizes the intrinsic value of nature and the interconnectedness of all forms of life (Ferreira, 2019). Rather than positioning humans as superior to or separate from the natural world, an ecocentric perspective emphasizes relational responsibility between humans and ecosystems (Naess, 2019). This perspective has gained increasing attention as environmental problems such as climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and natural resource depletion continue to intensify, revealing the limitations of anthropocentric approaches to education and development (Washington, 2018). In response to these limitations, environmental education has increasingly sought frameworks that translate ecocentric principles

into pedagogical practice. Similarly, (Montos,2019) notes that environmental educators tend to be eager for curricular and methodological guidelines that facilitate the design and effective development of their practical work.

Responding to this growing demand for ecocentrically informed educational frameworks, recent global educational initiatives have sought to embed environmental responsibility systematically within formal education systems. From an ecocentric perspective, a key pedagogical objective is to support learners in understanding what it means to be a living being and in recognizing the ecological relationships that connect all forms of life within the natural ecosystem (Ferreira, 2019). International organizations, particularly UNESCO, have addressed this need by promoting green education as an approach that aligns with ecocentric values, integrating respect for nature, ecological interconnectedness, and sustainability into curricula, pedagogy, and institutional practices. In the context of the accelerating climate crisis, UNESCO emphasizes that education must move beyond awareness-raising to actively preparing learners to take meaningful action for sustainability. This position was strongly articulated during the UN Transforming Education Summit in 2022, which highlighted the urgent need for curriculum transformation to equip learners with the knowledge, skills, and behaviours required to confront climate change and ensure climate justice (UNESCO, 2023). Through its Greening Education framework, UNESCO responds to the lack of clear curricular benchmarks for climate action by offering flexible guidance for curriculum revision, textbook development, transformative pedagogy, and assessment, drawing on the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) for 2030 framework (UNESCO, 2023). In this way, green education is positioned as a transformative force capable of fostering ecological awareness, ethical responsibility toward the more-than-human world, and sustainable action among learners.

In terms of growing urgency of ecological crises, teachers play a crucial role in translating ecocentric and green education principles into meaningful learning experiences for students (Hussain et.al, 2024). Particularly in the early stages of schooling, science education grounded in students' immediate environmental surroundings enables children to construct meaning through lived experience, shaping their ways of thinking and acting toward a more relational and non-

utilitarian conception of nature that integrates both environmental and human dimensions (Ferreira, 2019). Such an approach encourages learners to engage critically with the causes of contemporary environmental problems and to actively seek solutions, fostering a sense of responsibility toward the ecosphere. The importance of this educational orientation is further reinforced by research highlighting the need to cultivate learners' autonomy, intrinsic motivation, and holistic development in alignment with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 4 on quality education (Jiao et al., 2022; Kazazoglu, 2025). By embedding ecocentric values across disciplines and promoting reflective, action-oriented learning, teachers can empower students not only to develop ecological awareness but also to become committed agents of sustainable and pro-environmental change.

In contrast, despite the increasing global emphasis on environmental sustainability and green education, English language learning materials, particularly reading texts at the secondary school level, often remain detached from ecological and environmental contexts. Many students engage with reading materials that prioritize linguistic competence while offering limited opportunities to develop environmental awareness or ecocentric perspectives (Kazazoglu, 2025). This gap may reduce students' engagement with reading activities and limit the potential of English learning to contribute to broader educational goals. Specifically, students require meaningful and contextually relevant reading materials that integrate ecocentric values and environmental awareness to foster critical thinking, ethical reflection, and responsible attitudes toward nature (Kopnina, 2020). Integrating ecocentric perspectives into English reading materials enables students not only to improve reading comprehension skills but also to develop an understanding of ecological interconnectedness and the intrinsic value of nature. Such integration aligns with the goals of green education and supports the development of environmentally conscious learners equipped with 21st-century competencies, including problem-solving, critical literacy, and global citizenship (Smith, 2020). Therefore, integrating ecocentric and environmental awareness content into English reading materials is essential to enhance both language learning outcomes and students' ecological responsibility.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background provided, this study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent are the existing English reading learning materials for tenth graders integrated with ecocentric and environmental awareness?
2. How are the procedures for integrating ecocentric and environmental awareness into English reading learning material for tenth graders?
3. How is the design of English reading learning materials for tenth graders integrated with ecocentric and environmental awareness?
4. How are the validity and readability of English reading learning materials for tenth graders integrated with ecocentric and environmental awareness?

1.3 Research Purposes

In accordance with the research questions, the research purposes of this study are as follows:

1. To describe the extent to which the existing English reading learning materials for tenth grades are integrated with ecocentric and environmental awareness.
2. To illustrate the procedures of integrating ecocentric and environmental awareness into English reading materials for tenth graders.
3. To develop the design of English reading materials integrate with ecocentric environmental awareness for tenth graders.
4. To measure the validity and readability of English reading material integrated with ecocentric and environmental awareness.

1.4 Research Scope

This research focuses on integrating ecocentric and environmental awareness into English reading materials for tenth graders. These materials will be integrated to incorporate ecocentric and environmental awareness indicators. Thus, the final product of this study is a digital module of English reading materials integrated with ecocentric and environmental awareness. The design of the reading materials aligned with the objectives of Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar Phase E, which is a key component of the national learning goals for senior high school, especially for tenth graders, with the basis of reading focusing on learners' ability to

comprehend, interpret, and critically respond to various types of texts, as well as to construct meaning from written information in meaningful contexts. In accordance with the guidelines issued by the *Badan Standar, Kurikulum, dan Asesmen Pendidikan* (BESKAP) in 2025, the expected learning outcomes of Phase E are aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) at the B1 level, which emphasizes learners' ability to understand the main ideas of texts, infer meaning, and respond critically to familiar topics. Various types of texts are determined by Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar, such as narrative, description, procedure, exposition, recount, and report texts. Various types of text are determined by Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar, such as narrative, description, procedure, exposition, recount, and report. The ecocentric and environmental awareness comes from the frameworks and the modified indicators of ecocentric in green education concept and environmental awareness indicators. To make the design, DDR is the methodology used in this research that contains need analysis, design, development, and evaluation.

1.5 Research Significance

This study is expected to provide significant contributions both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this research contributes to the field of English language education by enriching discussions on integrating ecocentric values and environmental awareness into English reading materials. It expands existing literature by demonstrating how reading texts can function not only as language input but also as a medium for shaping students' ecological perspectives, ethical awareness, and attitudes toward the environment, particularly at the senior high school level.

Practically, the findings of this study are expected to benefit English teachers by providing insights into how ecocentric and environmental awareness values can be meaningfully integrated into reading materials for tenth graders. The materials developed or analyzed in this research may serve as references for teachers in selecting or adapting reading texts that promote both language comprehension and environmental consciousness. For students, the integration of ecocentric and environmental awareness in English reading materials can support the development of reading skills while fostering a deeper understanding of human–

nature relationships and encouraging responsible attitudes toward environmental issues. Furthermore, this study may assist curriculum developers and educational policymakers by offering considerations for incorporating environmental values into English learning materials in alignment with current educational goals and sustainability-oriented education.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid ambiguity and ensure a clear understanding of the terms used in this study, several key terms are defined as follows:

1. Ecocentric

Ecocentric refers to a perspective that recognizes the intrinsic value of all living beings and the natural environment, rather than viewing them solely in terms of their usefulness to humans. This concept is derived from ecocentrism as proposed by Arne Naess in 1919.

2. Environmental Awareness

Environmental awareness refers to the gradual understanding of environmental issues and the recognition of the interconnections between human actions, development, sustainability, and human responsibility (United Nation, 2013). It also involves the realization that humans and ecosystems coexist within a shared environment, namely the biosphere. This awareness fosters pro-environmental attitudes and encourages responsible behaviour toward environmental protection.

3. Reading Material

Reading Materials refer to any written texts used in language learning to support the development of learners' reading skills and comprehension. According to Brian Tomlison (2013), language learning materials are anything that is used to facilitate language learning, including texts that provide exposure to language and opportunities for learners to develop their skills.

4. CEFR

The Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR) is an international standard used to describe learners' language proficiency levels. Developed by the Council of Europe (2001), the CEFR provides a comprehensive

framework for assessing and describing language ability across six levels, ranging from A1 (beginner) to C2 (proficient).

5. Kurikulum Merdeka

Kurikulum Merdeka is a curriculum implemented in Indonesia that emphasizes flexibility in learning, student-centered approaches, and the development of competencies and character. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of Indonesia (2022), Kurikulum Merdeka provides teachers with the autonomy to design learning activities that are relevant to students' needs, interest, and contexts.

