

## GREEN CURRICULUM DESIGN: A LITERATURE REVIEW ON EMBEDDING ECOLOGICAL AWARENESS AND FAITH-BASED MORALITY IN EFL TEACHING

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### ABSTRACT

This study uses a literature review method to discuss how Green Curriculum Design can integrate ecological awareness and faith-based morality into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching. The purpose of this study is to explain how English learning can include topics about nature and moral values based on students' faith. The researcher collects and reviews previous studies about environmental education, moral values, and English teaching. The findings show that using ecological themes in English lessons can help students care more about nature and learn moral messages supported by their religious beliefs. Teachers also play an important role in connecting English learning with environmental and moral values in the classroom. In conclusion, Green Curriculum Design helps students not only improve their English skills, but also become responsible and caring individuals for nature and society.

**Keywords:** Green Curriculum Design, Literature Review, Ecological Awareness, Faith-Based Morality, EFL Teaching.

### INTRODUCTION

The issues of pollution, climate change, biodiversity loss, and ineffective waste management have escalated into urgent global concerns that affect not only environmental systems but also social, economic, and educational domains. As these challenges increasingly shape everyday life, education can no longer remain indifferent to environmental responsibility. Schools are expected to play a strategic role in shaping learners who are not only academically competent but also socially and environmentally responsible citizens. In this context, language education—particularly English as a Foreign Language (EFL)—offers significant potential as a space where global issues can be explored critically while linguistic competence is simultaneously developed.

Traditionally, EFL instruction has focused primarily on developing students' linguistic proficiency, emphasizing grammar mastery, vocabulary acquisition, and communicative skills. While these goals remain essential, contemporary educational paradigms argue that language classrooms should also contribute to the development of learners' values, critical awareness, and engagement with real-world problems. EFL classrooms are uniquely positioned to address global issues because English functions as an international language through which environmental discourses, scientific knowledge, and global cooperation are communicated. Consequently, EFL learning should not be limited to technical language use but should also prepare students to engage responsibly with global challenges, including environmental sustainability.

One emerging approach that responds to this need is Green Curriculum Design, particularly within the framework of Green English Language Teaching (GELT). Green curriculum design integrates ecological themes, sustainability issues, and ethical considerations into language learning activities. This approach encourages students to reflect critically on environmental problems, explore solutions through discussion and collaboration, and develop awareness of their role in protecting the environment. Rather than treating environmental topics as peripheral content, green curriculum design positions sustainability as a meaningful context for language use, thereby making learning more authentic and socially relevant.

Importantly, this approach goes beyond introducing isolated vocabulary related to nature or environmental problems. In green-oriented EFL classrooms, language learning becomes a medium through which students explore responsibility, empathy, and respect for the environment as part of ethical behaviour in daily life. Through discussions, projects, texts, and collaborative tasks, learners are encouraged to connect linguistic expression with moral reflection and social action. Such integration allows students to view environmental care not merely as abstract knowledge but as a value system that informs everyday decisions and behaviours.

Moreover, the flexibility of green curriculum design makes it adaptable to diverse educational contexts. Environmental and moral values can be cultivated in various settings, including public schools, private institutions, and culturally or faith-based learning environments. Because sustainability is a universal concern, ecological themes can be aligned with local values, cultural narratives, and institutional missions. This adaptability enhances the relevance of EFL instruction for a wide range of learners and supports inclusive educational practices. When environmental themes and moral values are embedded in meaningful language activities—such as debates, storytelling, project-based learning, and reflective writing—English lessons become more purposeful and closely connected to students' lived experiences.

Previous research has increasingly emphasized the role of Green English Language Teaching in enhancing students' eco-literacy and critical awareness. Studies have shown that pedagogical strategies such as project-based learning, media interaction, and collaborative tasks can effectively promote both language development and environmental consciousness. For instance, Gunawan et al. (2025) report that project-based and collaborative learning activities within GELT frameworks significantly enhance students' critical thinking skills and encourage the practice of eco-friendly behaviours. Their findings suggest that when students engage actively with environmental issues through language tasks, learning outcomes extend beyond linguistic competence to include attitudinal and behavioural change.

Despite these positive findings, other studies reveal important limitations in current EFL materials and practices. Raphael and Nandanan (2024), for example, indicate that most EFL textbooks still contain limited ecological content and tend to address environmental issues superficially. In many cases, sustainability topics are presented as isolated reading passages or vocabulary lists, without meaningful integration into communicative tasks or moral reflection. As a result, the potential of EFL classrooms to foster environmental responsibility remains underutilized. This gap between pedagogical ideals and instructional

materials highlights a need for curriculum models that systematically embed sustainability and ethical values into language learning.

A critical examination of existing literature also suggests that while many studies focus on the effectiveness of specific teaching methods—such as project-based learning or digital media—fewer studies address curriculum design at a conceptual and structural level. Much of the research discusses “what works” in isolated classroom interventions, but less attention is given to how environmental responsibility and moral values can be coherently integrated into the overall design of EFL curricula. Without a clear curricular framework, green practices may remain fragmented, dependent on individual teachers’ initiatives rather than being embedded systematically in language education.

Furthermore, although GELT research has grown in recent years, much of it concentrates on environmental awareness alone, often neglecting the explicit integration of universal moral values such as responsibility, empathy, and ethical decision-making. Sustainability education, however, is inherently value-laden and requires learners to reflect on their relationship with others, nature, and future generations. When moral values are not explicitly addressed, environmental learning risks becoming purely informational rather than transformative. Therefore, a curriculum model that intentionally combines environmental responsibility with moral education within EFL contexts is still underexplored.

Responding to these issues, the present article seeks to bridge these lacunas by discussing a pragmatic model of Green Curriculum Design that juxtaposes environmental responsibility and universal moral values within EFL learning. Rather than focusing solely on teaching techniques, this study emphasizes curriculum-level integration, demonstrating how ecological themes and ethical values can be systematically incorporated into language objectives, learning activities, and assessment practices. The proposed model aims to support the development of students’ language proficiency while simultaneously fostering a sustainability-oriented mindset.

By positioning English learning as both a linguistic and ethical endeavour, this article contributes to ongoing discussions on the broader purpose of EFL education in the twenty-first century. It argues that EFL classrooms can serve as meaningful spaces for cultivating environmentally responsible citizens who are linguistically equipped to participate in global discourse and socially prepared to respond to environmental challenges. Through green curriculum design, English instruction becomes not only a tool for communication but also a platform for promoting sustainable living and moral engagement.

## METHOD

This study applies a literature review method to explore the integration of Green Curriculum Design in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. The aim is to examine how ecological themes and universal moral values can be incorporated into EFL teaching to strengthen students’ environmental awareness and ethical behaviour. A literature review is used because the focus of this study is not to collect data from participants, but to analyse existing concepts, practices, and pedagogical models related to green education in language learning.

The sources were taken from indexed academic databases such as Sinta, Scopus, and Google Scholar, with publication ranges from 2007–2025, as well as classical theoretical references considered fundamental. The selected literature refers to a number of studies on green pedagogy, eco-literacy, values-based education, and EFL curriculum development. Only those sources were selected which provided either a theoretical framework or empirical findings; opinion-based articles that were not supported academically were excluded in order not to compromise the quality of data.

Thematic synthesis was used to analysed the data. The process entailed the following: (1) identification of key themes in each article; (2) comparison of how each study dealt with green education and integrated value in EFL; and (3) reduction of overlapping concepts to clear pedagogical implications. This synthesis enables the review to go beyond the literature summary to create a conceptual basis for a Green Curriculum Design model that can realistically be applied in diverse educational contexts.

## DISCUSSION AND FINDING

### A. TEFLIN Curriculum and CD (green curriculum)

This discussion on Green Curriculum Design must be prefaced by an overview of the basis of curriculum development in TEFLIN. The TEFLIN curriculum represents the basis on which the planning, teaching, and assessment of English are conceptualized in Indonesian schools. According to Madya (2007), curriculum design in Indonesia has to mirror the fact of a plural society with cultural values, moral principles, and linguistic backgrounds that are diverse. Therefore, curriculum development cannot be reduced to mere listing of language topics or grammatical structures but express a philosophy of learning representative of national identity and social values.

In the last couple of years, TEFLIN has moved from a strictly structural approach to more communicative, character-oriented, and competency-based learning. This is also in line with current reforms like the “Kurikulum Merdeka,” which gives importance to meaningful learning, learner autonomy, and project-based activities that would push students to apply language to real social issues. Therefore, today's English education is not only expected to build linguistic competence but also responsibility, critical thinking, and ethical awareness.

In the wake of this transformation, Green Curriculum Design emerges as a relevant extension of TEFLIN. It links language learning to ecological awareness and general moral values drawn from cultural, religious, and social teachings. Green Curriculum Design need not be a new and isolated movement; rather, it can be fully understood as part of a natural movement of Indonesia's education within a value-based framework, reinforcing Indonesia's vision of fostering learners who are not only linguistically competent but also socially responsible.

### B. Level Of Green Curriculum

The green curriculum is a learning approach that embeds environmental themes and sustainability values into learning at various levels of education, from early schooling to higher education. It not only aims at introducing ecological knowledge

but also at attitude and habit formation for responsible living. In this framework, the disciplines of science, social studies, arts, and language are represented as meaningful learning experiences in the light of environmental stewardship. Thus, learning is not confined to cognitive understanding but encompasses behaviour, reflection, and awareness about how individuals impact their surroundings. Rizal, Gunawan, and Nurkhamidah (2025) describe how Green Eco-Literacy has been implemented in the teaching of English at each of these three levels of curriculum development: the macro, meso, and micro. These levels determine how environmental values are translated from national policies into school programs and classroom practices.

At the macro level, integration of environmental education depends on the national education policy. This level involves curriculum planners and policymakers who attach sustainability and environmental character to the nation's educational objectives. In this context, English is seen not just as the subject through which communicative skills are attained but also as the context in which real-life global issues like climate change, plastic waste, and loss of biodiversity are brought to the fore. Sustainability emphasized at this level means that the curriculum acknowledges language learning as essentially a social practice linked to global citizenship. In other words, students are invited to appreciate that learning English increases their capacity to communicate on matters of an environmental nature that have an impact on communities throughout the world.

On the meso level, schools and other educational institutions process and implement national policy standards. This level is crucial because it is here that environmental values take shape as actual programs rather than a virtual set of guidelines. The schools may design ecological thematic English projects or spearhead campaigns to reduce plastic use within the school, establish school gardens, or partner with communities to clean up rivers or plant trees. An equally important influence at this level comes from teacher education programs, which offer training in how to handle topics on sustainability without sacrificing goals in language teaching. In fact, many teachers might still consider environmental content as an "extra topic" and not see it as a relevant component of language practice. Schools thus bridge policy and classroom realities at the meso level, ensuring that teachers receive instruction, resources, and support for the appropriate implementation of green curriculum principles.

At the micro level, teachers function as curriculum implementers who transform ecological values into classroom activities. Teachers decide how sustainability values appear in lesson plans, material selections, task designs, and assessments. Teachers may introduce reading passages on waste management, lead speaking activities about local environmental problems, require writing tasks that propose solutions to pollution, or conduct debates about renewable energy. Teachers can also use media like posters, advertisements, brochures, or environmental campaigns as learning texts. These kinds of practices allow students to use English for real communication while learning how to identify environmental problems and express solutions. Ecological values at this level become a part of authentic language use rather than a different moral lesson. These three interconnected levels demonstrate that Green Curriculum Design is more



than a brief thematic inclusion or an optional classroom program; it is rather a fully developed educational perspective that links cognitive learning, communication practices, and personal responsibility toward the environment. Rather than displacing linguistic goals, Green Curriculum Design extends English learning to significant communication associated with students' real-life context. In such a way, English teaching contributes to the student outcomes not only in terms of academic achievements but also as environmentally responsible citizens who realize that language is intertwined with values and action.

## C. Teflin Curriculum Green Changes

Over the past decades, the TEFLIN curriculum has undergone significant change in both philosophy and practice. Teaching English in Indonesia has long been under the grip of a structural or grammar-based orientation with an accent on memorization, accuracy, and mastery of linguistic forms. As the world and Indonesian educational discourses have evolved, there has been a shift, albeit slow, towards communicative, character-based, and environmentally aware orientations. This shift reflects the broader recognition that English language teaching needs to foster not only linguistic competence but also moral and environmental stewardship.

Kalsum, Humaeroah, and Agussalim (2022) contend that the emergence of Eco-ELT, a pedagogical movement for sustainable and innovative materials, shows how TEFLIN curriculum innovation responds to international challenges such as climate change and moral degradation. Their study highlights those eco-based materials not only improve the language ability of learners but also increase their environmental ethics consciousness through content-based language activities. It is a paradigm shift in which environmental content is introduced as part of English learning rather than as an external add-on.

Similarly, Sahril Nur, Ismail Anas, and Reski Pilu (2022) in *The Call for Environmentally-Based Language Teaching and Green Pedagogy* emphasize that curriculum reform has to extend from textbook revision to a rethinking of the pedagogy itself. They consider that green pedagogy encourages teachers to become "environmental mediators" who integrate issues of sustainability into communicative tasks, discussion, and evaluation. This perspective is aligned with Indonesia's educational vision for the 21st century, in which language education is a means for developing critical, ethical, and ecologically literate citizens.

In the Indonesian context, such changes are not merely pedagogical reforms but moral imperatives that reflect the nation's educational philosophy (Pancasila values and religious morality). The inclusion of ecological awareness and moral education in TEFLIN implies that English is not transmitted as a neutral tool but as a means of cultivating empathy, care, and responsibility towards human beings and the Earth. Green Curriculum Design is therefore a further extension of TEFLIN's evolution from form-focused instruction to transformative learning that incorporates language, morality, and sustainability.

## D. Based Morality And Green EFL

The other essential theme in the implementation of Green Curriculum Design in teaching EFL is moral values based on students' culture. In many countries, various

cultures and beliefs teach people to care for nature, avoid waste, and act responsibly toward their environment. Therefore, integrating moral values into the teaching of English is not aimed at teaching new doctrines but rather at linking English instruction with ethical values already embedded in students' culture and beliefs. This paradigm shift encourages students to perceive environmental care not only as a school task but as a trait of good character, too. This notion of embedding moral and ecological values into English learning has also been supported by several scholars.

Oktaviani et al. (2023) claimed that EFL classes can be an ethical learning space when students are invited to develop values such as empathy, gratitude, and responsibility. Likewise, Yuliana (2022) argued that faith-based values can enhance the formation of character when the teacher connects language activities to real life regarding environmental responsibility, such as not littering and appreciating nature. Furthermore, Nugroho (2023) asserted that the association of cultural principles or faith-based values with language learning will enable students to develop communication competence along with ecological awareness. From this perspective, the integration of morality with values in Green EFL allows learners not only to develop their linguistic abilities but also to instill ethical values that develop a sense in them to care for nature. Learning English becomes more meaningful since students are not only learning about vocabulary, text structures, or grammatical features but are also guided to think critically about how human beings impact the environment. In this way, Green Curriculum Design has a part in shaping learners who are responsible environmentally, considering the protection of nature as a part of their moral identity, which is fostered by the very cultural values and beliefs they adhere to in daily life.

## **E. Green Curriculum Outcomes**

The Transformation From Linguistic to character- and value-oriented orientation of the TEFLIN curriculum has also led to significant changes in its assumed learning outcomes. Traditionally, English language class learning outcomes were measured by linguistic proficiency (Grammar knowledge, vocabulary knowledge, or communicative competency). Contemporary school ideology in Indonesia has broadened the outcomes to include character formation, moral thinking, and environmental awareness as essential elements in English education.

As Sukarno and Riyadini (2023) state, the implementation of TEFLIN curriculum through contextualized learning resources and reflective teaching activities is an important factor in building character among students. Through their research, they highlight that learner learn moral values such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy not only through explicit moral instruction, but also through ethical contexts embedded in classroom conversation, language activities, and content materials. This finding resonates with Indonesia's ideal of education as nation-building, where language functions both as a medium of communication and as a tool of moral upbringings.

In the sense of Green Curriculum Design, these findings open up even wider. As English learning embraces ecological concerns and faith considerations, learners not only become linguistically capable but also eco-literate and spiritually responsible. For instance, reading comprehension materials on environmental protection can be

coupled with moral reflection questions grounded in religious teachings of stewardship over nature (khalifah fil ard in Islamic education). This integration reinforces environmental ethics and religious morality in accordance with Indonesia's philosophy of education that prioritizes harmony among knowledge, faith, and action.

Lastly, TEFLIN's success under the Green Curriculum Design model can be considered as total competencies, students capable of communicating well in English, critically evaluating moral and environmental issues, and acting responsibly as global citizens with firm spiritual foundations. This new outcome definition is in harmony with a broader consciousness that language learning is not just learning structure, but most essentially building worldviews and developing humanity.

## F. Implications For EFL Teachers

The use of a green curriculum for EFL means that teachers can include several contexts related to nature or the surrounding environment in their teaching. The positive impact of using a green curriculum is that students can build a high sense of empathy as well as responsibility in taking care of their environment. Examples of activities that can be carried out include students using environmental policy themes in debate practice and interactive writing; these activities not only improve students' speaking skills but also enhance their critical thinking and cross-cultural communication abilities. Using a green curriculum can boost teachers' sense of professionalism in the classroom, which may entail certification or cooperation with non-governmental organizations (Gunawan et al., 2025; Hussain et al., 2024).

While implementing a green curriculum has many benefits, there are drawbacks as well, such as a lack of resources and teachers' lack of environmental science expertise. A syllabus that solely emphasizes rigorous learning presents another difficulty, making it exceedingly challenging to incorporate this curriculum into the classroom. Cultural sensitivity is also crucial because problems differ depending on the setting, such as the distinctions between rural and urban areas. This can cause students to feel isolated in a social context.

For the role of a comprehensive green curriculum, teachers can use vocabulary related to environmental issues such as police or videos about the environment on BBC. Another example, teachers can collaborate with local environmental managers or organize field trips, and also adjust content and level for students, further enhancing its effectiveness. In addition, teachers can use interactive and digital media such as videos, infographics, and online projects. This approach allows English lessons to become spaces not only for communication but also for character development and spirituality.

## CONCLUSION

Green Curriculum Design English learning more relevant and connected with real life. Green Curriculum Design allows students to deepen their English knowledge and gain precious moral values such as responsibility, sympathy, and care for the environment. Whenever teachers include issues relating to the environment, such as climate change, pollution, or recycling. Students learn that language can be used to debate actual issues and make a positive difference.



The Green Curriculum also fosters the students' character. It makes them think critically, act responsibly, and appreciate the beauty of creation as part of living their faith and everyday life. Learning English through environmental and moral issues makes learning fun and worthwhile, making students perceive English as not just a subject, but as a means of expressing values and serving society. But carrying out this strategy is not always easy. Teachers may face challenges such as lacking enough teaching materials, limited time to prepare, and little institutional support. Therefore, coordination between teachers, schools, and policy-makers is required so that better provision of resources as well as nurturing conditions for green-based learning can be ensured. All in all, Green Curriculum Design has the potential to transform EFL classrooms into spaces where language skills are not just learned, but also moral values and ecological awareness, making learners reflective and responsible world citizens.

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