

English Pedagogy and Ecological Advocacy: Reflections On Eco-ELT Research and Practice

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Abstract:

This article shares my reflections as the founder of the Eco-ELT concept and community, focusing on Eco-ELT research and practice. By reading this, ELT scholars and teachers should feel empowered to address environmental catastrophes through Eco-ELT. Let's save our planetary ecosystems from ecological destruction through Eco-ELT.



ELT and Environmental Sustainability

English Language Teaching (ELT) shares responsibility for addressing sustainability crises (Katunich & Goulah, 2020), including environmental crises (Mercel et al., 2022). ELT departments worldwide must, therefore,

integrate environmental sustainability into learning, research, and community engagement to solve the environmental catastrophes (Saiful, 2024). Working on this pivotal role of ELT in environmental sustainability, I have found myself as an expert in Eco-ELT.

Personal and Professional Engagements in Environmentalism

I have dedicated my life to environmentalism for almost 13 years starting from high school in 2010. I participated in various environmental activities such as trash cleaning, biodiversity protection projects, and teacher training on environmental education. In 2013, I was chosen as one of 100 ASEAN Youth Eco-Leaders. In 2014, I was one of 100 Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) participants. In 2015, my team secured a youth and community development grant from the U.S. State Government, organizing "ASEAN Youth Energy Institute Camp". Founding the Eco-ELT concept in 2014, 2020, and 2023, I further explored this intersection in my doctoral dissertation. In 2023, I established the Eco-ELT global community on Facebook. Lastly, I have been disseminating the Eco-ELT to ELT teachers and scholars across 12 countries through ELT webinars and conferences.



Personal Reflections on Eco-ELT

- Addressing environmental crises could not be a heartbeat. It requires persistence and collaborative efforts across sectors and disciplines, including ELT. Small changes in students' awareness or worldviews about the environment are worth celebrating. Of course, above all, we still aim to shape students' pro-environmental behaviors.
- Eco-ELT was born as a home for environmental movements in ELT to live and grow, originating in 2014 (see my publications: Saiful, 2014, 2020, & 2023).
- Eco-ELT refers to and constitutes both the study and teaching of environmental issues in ELT (Saiful, 2023). Therefore, when ELT scholars and/or teachers do research and/or teach about environmental topics in English education, they are engaging in Eco-ELT study and practice.
- Eco-ELT is different from ecolinguistics and ecocriticism. Ecolinguistics focuses on the roles of language in environmental advocacy, while ecocriticism works on the roles of literature (literary study) in building positive humans and nature relationships. Adversely, Eco-ELT focuses on the roles of English education to address environmental crises which span across policy, curriculum, instructions, assessment, teachers, students, and so on. Although they are different in terms of concept

- and focus of movement, they can be integrated to address environmental crises.
- The positionality of Eco-ELT within ELT is the same as EMI, CALL, MALL, and so on. It is a branch of study and practice within ELT.
- Eco-ELT practice adheres to the principle of post-method pedagogy where ELT teachers have autonomy to choose teaching approaches, methods, strategies, or techniques that fit with the contexts of their teaching and learning.
- Eco-ELT research upholds the principle of interdisciplinary study where ELT researchers could incorporate multi-discipline approaches to study environmental education practices in ELT.
- We must strengthen the positionality of ELT in the global environmental sustainability landscape through collective efforts on Eco-ELT research and practice.

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