

## **Nurturing Environmental Sustainability through Green Contents: Exploring Eco-centric Consciousness among English Language Learners in Pakistan**

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### **Abstract**

Current study is projected to explore eco-centric consciousness and ecological literacy among English Language Learners (ELLs) in Pakistan through the eminence of integrating green contents in English Language Textbooks (ELT) or in curricula. The study supplementary demonstrates the requisite and essentiality to instigate ELLs conscious about environmental concerns and their potential imprints on human health in particular and life in general. In order to analyse the eco-centric consciousness and eco-literacy among ELLs for nurturing a sustainable ecological environ, the research has inferred a qualitative method of analysis to investigate green contents. Data is collected from ELT contents and to delimit the data green contents are extracted from elementary level ELT curriculum being taught under SNC 2023 in Pakistan. Purposive sampling technique is being exploited to extort two units i.e. “Smog” from grade 7 and “Trees Plantation” from grade 8. The findings of the study designate that ELT contents are manoeuvred to foster environmental sustainability and eco-centric consciousness among ELLs of elementary level in Pakistan. It is derived through contrastive approach that has been espoused by the researcher with regard to assimilation of green contents in ELT. At one hand, ecological issues and challenges are incorporated through green contents and on the other hands, steps that are taken or being engaged to augment ecological literacy among ELLs are encapsulated in ELT contents. It is put in a nutshell through the analysis that green contents in ELT contents at elementary level in Pakistan have manipulating imprints on ELLs in order to nurture eco-centric consciousness and environmental sustainability. It has been undertaken through the projection of contrastive approach, i.e. projection of ecological menaces at

one hand and tree plantation as a source of protecting environment and nurturing ecological literacy and sustainability among ELLs.

**Keywords:** Eco-centric Consciousness, Eco-Literacy, Environmental Sustainability, Green Contents, Going Green, ELT, ELLs

### Introduction

Climatic or environmental concerns and menaces have underway to spot their emergence since long are, at this instant, upsetting human life significantly in terms of health, mental and social dynamics (Stibbe, 2020). It is also an actuality, due to the climatic menaces, that if these are endorsed to keep going in an identical rate of knots these will have even more negative and adverse imprints on life and society (Faramarzi & Janfeshan, 2021). Hence, there is a mounting materialization among human to integrate eco-literacy, environmental responsiveness and eco-centric consciousness into curriculum so that learners can be made conscious of these menaces. Environmental issues and language exploit are interrelational as language learning and teaching have immense persuasion in shaping learners thoughts and perceptions (Zia et al., 2022). Likewise, language has also deep-rooted sway as far as the social and cultural dynamics related to ecological menaces are concerned for a sustainable ecological future (Dash, 2019).

Keeping in view, the essential correlation between language i.e. ELT and eco-literacy it turns out to be indispensable to slot in ecological insides i.e. green contents in English Language Teaching or Textbooks (ELT) as it will urge ELLs to be cognisant regarding the global environmental phenomenon (Zahoor & Janjua, 2020) at one hand and nurture their eco-centric consciousness for sustainable ecological future on the other. Faramarzi & Janfeshan (2021) encapsulated that integration of environment allied insides in ELT contents are effectual to construct ELLs attentiveness concerning global concerns with regard to nature, environment and eco-literacy. Students are better capable to grasp ecological issues, menaces and challenges, likewise they can be trained efficiently how to evade such issues and protect the ecological system for a sustainable environmental future primarily through incorporating green contents in ELT contents (Majeed et al., 2022).

Luardini and Sujiyani (2018) avowed the notion that ELT contents are not merely effectual outfits for nurturing ELLs language skills but are uniformly advantageous for fostering attentiveness with regard to global concerns i.e. climatic or environmental issues for a global citizenship. In addition, ELT is an influential connectivity agent as language is utilized both either to construct a world-view or to contrive a certain notion (Mliless & Larouz, 2018). Language, its learning or teaching, functions as a dominant agent to maximize the constructive action plan for societal networks in all facets of human bustle. Likewise, it is an imperative channel that can be resourcefully operated to tackle global climatic, environmental and ecological concerns at

one hand and to develop ELLs mindfulness and enthrallment to nurture their eco-centric literacy for an enhanced, secure and sustainable ecological future on the other (Goulah, 2017).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Green contents in ELT are influential mediums to cultivate eco-centric consciousness among ELLs of Pakistan to promote environmental sustainability and ecological literacy through pinpointing global ecological menaces at one hand and instigate them to protect and endorse eco-centric future on the other. Academic contents are not simply restricted to academic activities and language learning abilities, rather these have the influencing and manipulating sway on the psyche of the young mind, especially at elementary level. Green contents integrated in ELT contents are effectual as far as the Going Green campaign is concerned. Likewise environmental and climatic concerns i.e. global warming, ozone layer depletion, population, overpopulation, water pollution, climate change, smog and deforestation are the green contents which are obligatory to be incorporated in ELT contents to assimilate eco-literacy among ELLs. Keeping in view, it is indispensable to weigh up the persona of green contents in ELT to craft ELLs eco-centric consciousness at one hand and activate them to sponsor environmental sustainability on the other. Therefore, the under view study is anticipated to highlight climatic and environmental menaces engulfing the globe to prop up eco-literacy. It is, in addition, intended at to figure out the steps being taken to promote environmental sustainability. Likewise, how ELLs react and are manipulated by these insides are also brought to light through their enthrallment towards Going Green, tree plantation and budding garden at homes and schools.

### **Research Objectives**

At hand, study is designed to accomplish the following research aims or objectives.

- To probe the effectiveness of fostering green contents into ELT curriculum as denote to nurture eco-centric consciousness among ELLs of Pakistan.
- To explore the empirical imprints of eco-centric consciousness on ELLs of Pakistan towards their approach and conduct towards environment.
- To underline the key ecological menaces and environment friendly insides being integrated in green contents to incorporate eco-literacy among ELLs of Pakistan.

### **Research Questions**

Bearing in mind the research objectives, subsequent research questions are intended to seek their answers in the study.

- How far the integration of green contents in ELT contents is effectual as a mean to nurture eco-centric consciousness among ELLs of Pakistan?
- How has eco-centric consciousness through green contents among ELLs urbanized their psyche towards environmental sustainability?
- What and how are the ecological menaces and environment affable contents being incorporated in ELT contents?

### **Significance of the Study**

As globe is in front of relentless ecological menaces and concerns, so the imperativeness of the under view study lies in exploring eco-centric consciousness of ELLs of Pakistan to enable them ecological cultured to exert for environmental sustainability. By spotlighting on how ELLs counter and intimate with climatic sustainability through green contents, the current study donates influentially to intersect learning and eco-literacy at the same time. The shot is further illustrated how green insides incorporated in ELT contents sponsor environmental responsiveness and hence nurturing a global world-view of ELLs. In addition, this attempt may pave way for curricula more focused on eco-centric themes and thus fostering learners to be more ecological literate and are enthusiastic to contribute for environmental sustainability in their societal, cultural and linguistic paradigms.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Keeping in view the objectives and rational of the under view study, it is delimited to merely green contents embedded in ELT at elementary level in Pakistan. Further, it is demarcated to two units i.e. *Smog* and *Trees Plantation* for focused analysis. It is also confined to the thematic, contents and textual analysis to devise thematic patterns pertinent to ecological menaces and eco-centric consciousness.

### **Review of the Literature**

Ecological disarray is a global phenomenon which ranges from Africa to Asia and from America to Europe alike. Ecological degradation and the need for environmental sustainability have grown to be a matter of immense concerns among academicians and researchers around the globe to construct people as well as learners eco-centric consciousness and to ensure the maximum protection of ecological prospect. In this regard, academic texts in the form of textbooks in general and ELT textbooks in particular have donated considerably to craft ELLs consciousness headed for eco-literacy and environmental attentiveness (Buzo, 2010). Hickman and Portfilio (2012) encapsulated the same notion, as "Textbooks can help or hinder our ability to face the environmental challenges of a changing world". Keeping in view the noteworthy persona of textbooks and green contents for ensuring ecological sustainability and eco-centric consciousness among learners, assorted studies have been conducted.

Cristovoa (2022) dissected Brazilian EFL textbooks with regard to their ecological contents; summed up that there is hardly any considerable involvement such contents have on the ELLs to assimilate eco-literacy among them. Majeed et al. (2022) explored ELT textbooks at secondary level in Pakistani context and encompassed with the scheme that activities in textbooks stimulate ELLs to seize steps to ensure conscientiousness towards our sphere and to confiscate immediate steps to guarantee environmental sustainability. Bistrom and Lundstrom (2021) appraised the persona of textbooks in Swedish schools, where it is originated that there is a very inadequate function that ELT insides in the form of green contents have on ecological expansion of ELLs. Hookoomsing and Ooze (2020) scrutinized the same in Mauritian context with regard to ELT texts of grade 3 and summed up that ELT textbooks failed to put any impact on ELLs with regard to eco-centric consciousness, rather these sponsor destructive behaviour towards environment.

Zahoor and Janjua (2020) investigated the imprints of ELT insides of primary level on ELLs with regard to environmental concerns and derived that ELT contents principally the utilization of language spotlights considerable persona to pack in ELLs cognisant towards the destruction of the nature and environment and thus accenting the essentiality to promise ecological well-being. Zhou and Haung (2017) evaluated green contents of ELT textbooks of secondary level in Chinese context and affirmed the role of language learning and teaching along with contents as substantial to endorse eco-literacy among ELLs. Dastenaee and Poshtvan (2018) put in a nutshell the reconsider of previous studies conducted in Iran with regard to role of ELT in sponsoring eco-literacy among ELLs and encompassed that Iranian context in this regard is still in an era of infancy if put in global context with regard to eco-centric consciousness.

Hamed (2021) executed a study to weigh up the facade of Egyptian ELT textbooks or insides for ecological discourse rationale and summed up that there is a superficial variety of conservationism that existed in green contents of ELT textbooks with regard to environmentalism. Ekasiwi and Bram (2023) travelled around eco-linguistics essentials in Indonesian ELT and derived that not all the ELT contents surround eco-linguistics features in terms of words, sentences, themes and topics to take care of eco-centric perception among ELLs. Bearing in mind the connotation of the ecological menaces, eco-literacy and the scarcity of the study in Pakistani context principally at elementary level with regard to imprints of green contents among ELLs of Pakistan in nurturing their eco-centric consciousness for sustainable ecological prospect current study is significantly indispensable, vital and the need of the time.

### **Theoretical Underpinning**

Ecological Discourse Analysis (EDA) has been manoeuvred as a theoretical framework to scrutinize the eco-centric consciousness of ELLs of Pakistan.

EDA has the sway to evaluate ecological themes and contents in ELT through green contents. EDA abets the researcher to unearth how language and communicative patterns in ELT insides contribute in shaping and scheming ELLs environmental behaviour through inculcation of green contents (Fairclough, 2013). Miless and Larouz (2018) encapsulated the constructive and destructive persona of discourse in contents. Language operates as a framing in the course of vocabulary and linguistic strategies to boost ELLs consciousness towards environmental sustainability. Power dynamics in discourse function as a driving force to persuade the psyche of ELLs. In addition, analysis is conceded out through depiction of nature and environment to pervade eco-centric outlook among learners. Environmental narrative is yet an added key attribute of EDA theory which has instigated persona on learners. Cultural and social dimensions of EDA theory also have a say in analysing the facade of green contents in nurturing eco-centric alertness for ecological sustainability (Fairclough, 2013). Last but not the least, environmental education spots the theory of EDA as a moving facet to accomplish the objectives of the study.

### **Methodology**

In order to investigate the role of green contents in nurturing eco-centric consciousness among ELLs of Pakistan for environmental sustainability, a qualitative method of analysis has been extracted by the researcher. For that intent, green contents incorporated in ELT of elementary grade under SNC 2023 has been extorted for the study. ELLs at this level are typically ranges between 10 and 13 years of age. A sample consisted of two units from ELT of grade 7 and 8 are extracted for the purpose. *Smog* is derived from grade 7 textbook and *Tree Plantation* is devised from grade 8 textbook. For the extraction of data, a purposive sampling technique has been inferred by the researcher. In addition, green contents criteria have been extorted by the researcher to formulate the data in lines with the objectives of the study. In order to analyse the data, a contrastive approach of analysis has been encompassed by the researcher. *Smog* manifests the ecological and environmental concerns of today world, while *Tree Plantation* highlights the steps being taken out to protect the environment and to foster eco-centric consciousness among ELLs. Contents, thematic and textual patterns evaluation has been kept in view to analyse the data.

### **Findings and Discussion**

#### **Eco-centric Consciousness through *Smog***

#### **Multifaceted layers of Ecological Issues**

Through a dialogic mode, ELLs of Pakistan are tended conscious about the environmental issues that the world in general and Pakistan in particular is facing these days. It is conceded by means of diverse thematic patterns that are pertinent to eco-literacy or consciousness. It is indicated that the world is facing numerous environmental and climatic concerns which are enticing as severe challenges with the passage of time. At the very start of discussion



the teacher has conveyed and recapitulate the environmental issues that the world is undertaking as “These include deforestation, overpopulation, water pollution, climate change, global warming, ozone layer depletion and air pollution” (PTB, p. 42). So, it is the first influential feature in the unit to underline the issue allied with climatic concern to craft ELLs conscious about the severity of the issue. After summing up the crux of environmental hazards, the unit is shifted toward a foremost environmental concern which is surrounding by the world at present and that is “smog”.

### **Issue of Smog**

The unit has distinctive the notion of smog as an outline of air pollution to devise ELLs conscious about this ecological menace. In addition, the history of smog is mentioned as old as five decades. After that, reasons of the smog are being transferred to ELLs as “It is mainly a product of burning a large amount of high Sulphur coal and vapours and smoke emitting from automobiles” (PTB, p. 42). It swells all around in winter season. Then the teacher involves the learners in an interactive session in the unit to contextualize the hazard of smog in local i.e. Pakistani context “Every winter cities in upper and central parts of Pakistan wear a blanket of fog” (PTB, p. 42). Besides, the severity of the issue is also exposed to ELLs by indicating “During December and January smog slows down everything and on some occasions brings life to a standstill” (PTB, p. 42) to construct this ecological menace more intensified to make the learners conscious.

### **Reasons and Impacts of Smog on Health**

Reasons following this ecological menace incorporate “rapid and sustained industrialisation and the addition of thousands of vehicles” (PTB, p. 42). So as to persuade ELLs more considerate about ecological menace, its far-reaching multifaceted layers of impacts on human life, which are negative in terms of both physical and mental health point of view, are enlisted. When invisible particles of smog infiltrate in human bodies it results in “acute and chronic diseases including asthma, strokes, heart attacks and dementia. They can increase the risk of respiratory diseases as well as lung cancer.” (PTB, p. 43) It is also specified that “poor air quality results in poor mental health” (PTB, p. 43) with regard to mental health impacts. Punjab province chiefly Lahore is severely affected by smog due to “vehicle and industrial emissions, smoke from brick kilns, the burning of crops residue, general waste and dust from construction sites...large scale cutting of trees to build new roads and buildings” (PTB, p. 43).

### **Minimising Ecological Menace to Accentuate Eco-centric Consciousness**

Keeping in view the multifaceted layers of ecological and environment concern and its hazards on human life in terms of physical and mental health, the unit “*Smog*” also hint steps that are indispensable to put off smog as an ecological menace. It is recommended directly that by wearing mask and glasses can be handy measures to reduce the risk of air particles being

penetrated into human bodies caused by air pollution in the form of smog. Drinking extra amount of water, blowing nose at regular intervals, cleaning contaminants, washing hand and face, remaining indoors, utilizing air purifiers and by means of fog lights during driving are the steps that can minimise the effects of smog considerably. While the unit is indicative of the indirect reminder of rooting out the causes, that escort to smog to construct a sustainable and eco-friendly environment all around. So, by means of green contents in ELT textbooks, ELLs are made conscious about the ecological menaces and instigate them to seize eco-friendly steps for sustainable eco-centric literacy.

### **Strategies of Nurturing Eco-centric Consciousness**

In the unit *Smog*, there are several ways and means that have been espoused to expertise ELLs realization concerning climatic or eco-centric literacy. Firstly, instead of being instructive or didactic, the approach is collaborative and dialogic. Through a dialogue and interaction between teacher and the learners, an outline about global issues with relevant to eco-literacy or climatic change has been incorporated. Then it is specified through the hazard of smog widespread in Pakistan at a severe form. Secondly, a comprehensive approach is being integrated as smog is defined, its causes are enlisted, its consequences are elaborated and how to reduce its effects on human health have also been penned down. Thirdly, contextualization approach is espoused as Punjab, Lahore and its surrounding locale are indicated as most hit areas where this issue is at relentless form.

Fourthly, vocabulary utilization relevant to eco-literacy have been implied to infer ELLs conscious about nature and environmental issues i.e. “deforestation, overpopulation, water pollution, climate change, global warming, ozone layer depletion and air pollution...smog, fog, coal, vapours, industrialisation, air quality, The Air Quality Index, smoke and burning of crops.” Another influential tool is the exploitation of graphic and textual illustrations that construe ELLs ecologically conscience. Critical thinking and enticement to inscribe about smog in the exercise is yet another striking strategy that has been made use of in the unit. In the concluding session of the unit ELLs are prompted to write “causes of air pollution and its solutions” so along with critical thing, fostering creativity has also been inspired in the unit to infuse ELLs attentiveness about nature, climate, ecological issue in general and smog as an eco-centric concern in particular to shield nature and ecological well-being.

### **Eco-centric Consciousness through *Trees Plantation***

#### **Presentation of Natural Magnificence**

In this unit, through the utilization of talk time technique which is conceded via email the nature, its exquisiteness and purity has been propagated to devise ELLs conscious about natural world and ecological environ. Email is an invitation from a friend *Asjad* to his friend *Fahad* for a vacation trip to Kashmir which is replete with natural magnificence and that too in the purest



form. Nature and its loveliness have been portrayed with the assistance of a rhetorical expression i.e. simile as “it is known as heaven on earth due to its evergreen forests, freshwater lakes and streams” (PTB, p. 115). Here, the approach of textbook discourse in *Tree Plantation* is dissimilar from the discourse of “Smog” as there is a contrastive view towards nature has been depicted. In *Smog* climatic issues are projected but here nature and its prettiness has been manipulated as a contrivance to manoeuvre the consciousness of ELLs towards nature, its purity and the ways to safeguard it from being effected or destroyed.

### **Trees Plantation Day as a Fun Activity**

In the second portion of the unit, “Diary Writing” has been consumed as a gadget to exhibit the ecstasy and fun that a student experiences during tree plantation at school. During National Tree Plantation, teachers and school gardener planted rose’s plants in school garden. So, through plantation, roses and school garden natural appeal is being nurtured among learners. On the other hand, through the speech specified by the headmaster in the morning assembly, the other dimension of the picture is depicted as “cutting of trees has increased the risk of natural disasters. If we want to save our earth and creatures living on it, we should plant more and more trees to make the mother earth beautiful and green.” (PTB, p. 116) It is also publicized that government has situate a target to “Go Green” in order to avert the earth from natural and climatic challenges that are engulfing the land at large.

### **Tree Plantation Competition**

In addition, there is a tree plantation competition that is also being anticipated to hold among groups of students to craft the learners’ mindfulness about the essentiality of going green to avert climatic menaces at one hand and to construct earth a better place to live in. It is also projected in the unit that mere plantation is not enough, rather intriguing care of the planted trees into healthy and growing trees is also indispensable and it is embedded through incentive of reward pronounced by the head teacher “the group whose sapling would grow into a healthy tree will be rewarded” (PTB, p. 117). For that, students are assigned duties to tend the planted trees. Furthermore, it transports attentiveness and eco-centric consciousness among ELLs that they map to fetch tree pots to their homes to plant and let them grow into a healthy tree at home as a token to exhibit their ecological literacy. The student who is scripting the diary is shown excited about his school plantation competition as “oh! I really wish that my group wins this competition.” (PTB, p. 117)

### **Plastic Bottles Tree Pots**

In the culminating slice of the unit through an oral communication between *Saima* and *Nasir*, the factual reflection of consciousness towards nature, climate and eco-centric literacy that ELT textbooks inspire among ELLs in Pakistan are anticipated through an activity. Nasir is publicized making plastic bottle pots of diverse designs with the intention to seed and grow

plants in them. He acquires the scheme of going green from the day they celebrated at school under the title “National Trees Plantation Day” as he contemplates that in order to turn aside the challenges posed to climatic and ecological well-being it is not merely sufficient to cultivate plants at school. Additionally, Saima draws attention towards the imperativeness of having a garden at home also signifies the eco-centric literacy and consciousness that textbook has fostered among ELLs. Saima and Nasir enthusiasm and collaboration in creating pots is a momentous indicator of ecological literacy among ELLs for a sustainable ecological environ at school, home and all where.

### **Techniques of Nurturing Eco-centric Consciousness**

The unit under analysis “*Trees Plantation*” has exploited assorted strategies in order to foster eco-centric consciousness among ELLs. Firstly, the presentation of natural exquisiteness has been rendered as a means to manoeuvre the interest of the learners towards nature. Bringing into play simile and flowery language is yet an added technique that is pertinent to manipulate the inquisitiveness of ELLs. Thirdly, “National Trees Plantation Day” has been propagated as a considerable endeavour to craft ELLs conscious about the essentiality to cultivate and grow trees in order to turn aside the climatic challenges. The persona of headmaster and head teacher is also essential to industrialize ELLs conscientiousness towards ecological literacy and attentiveness about the essentiality of going green. The government target of “Going Green” is also promulgated as an emblem to foster eco-centric literacy among ELLs.

Competition and incentive of reward is also a well-thought-out strategy that has been contrived to make ELLs enthral towards plantation as a measure to counter and avert climatic challenges. Ecological vocabulary utilization is yet an added noteworthy approach that has been inspired by the discourse of the text to persuade the psyche of ELLs towards eco-centric consciousness and for sustainable ecological environ. Talk time, diary writing and oral communication are the mode which are being operated as a manipulating agent to sway the minds of ELLs towards nature, climate and eco-centric literacy which are considerable as far as sustainable ecological environ in the world is concerned. The enthusiasm among ELLs through Saima and Nasir is sketched out as an emblem that the textbook discourse has been successful in nurturing eco-centric consciousness among ELLs in Pakistan.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of the study signify that in ELT insides are adequately equipped to foster environmental sustainability and eco-centric consciousness among ELLs of elementary level in Pakistan. In addition, there is a contrastive approach that has been espoused with regard to incorporation of green contents. At one hand, ecological menaces and challenges are incorporated through green contents and on the other hand, measures that are engaged or being taken to augment ecological literacy among ELLs are also

encapsulated in ELT contents. Ecological menaces like over population, deforestation, smoke, water & air pollution, ozone layer depletion, climatic change and global warming are fostered to put together ELLs conscious about environmental issues. In addition, through smog, the challenge of this environmental haphazard is indicated as a matter of concern.

On the contrary, steps that are essential to shield nature and nurture environmental sustainability are implied in the course of natural beauty and tree plantation campaign. The approach of illustrating both the dynamics exclusively as a comprehensive overview of the reasons, imprints and steps to minimise the menace of smog are anticipated in the unit *Smog*. On the other hand, environmental sustainability are nurtured through the delineation of natural magnificence of Kashmir, celebration of National Trees Plantation, Plantation competition and making plants pots activities. In *Smog*, ecological vocabulary, thematic and textual patterns, graphic depiction and contextual parameters are inspired to manipulate eco-centric consciousness among learners.

While in the unit *Tree Plantation*, the spotlight is on the activities, enthusiasm and collaborative approach among learners to plant tree at school and home has been extracted to infuse the psyche of ELLs. Here, the concept of garden has been contrived as an emblem of nurturing environmental sustainability parameter among ELLs of Pakistan at elementary level. Likewise with the contrastive approach there is a similarity as interactive approach is espoused in both the dynamics of projecting eco-centric consciousness among ELLs. In addition, diary writing, oral skills, talk time, critical thinking and creative writing have been inferred in order to nurture eco-centric consciousness among ELLs for a protective ecological sustainability at large.

### **Recommendations**

To construct the eco-centric consciousness among ELLs of Pakistan, it is recommended to incorporate additional green content as the substance in ELT textbooks. Dynamic instructional stratagems i.e., outdoor activities footed on eco-friendly ventures and hands-on practice can be an effectual medium to elevate eco-centric literacy among ELLs in Pakistan. Community rendezvous in eco-centric initiatives through ELT discourse can also capitalize on the enterprise between society and environmental organizations. The operation of technology to showcase green content interactively and compellingly can further cater to eco-centric attentiveness among ELLs. Last, but not least, it is suggested that policymakers should be heedful of the function of environmental sustainability through green content in academic discourse in general and language discourse in particular.

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