ISSN:2828-6235
Impact factor:13.77

International Journal of Literature and Language Studies(IJLLS)

LINGUODIDACTIC FOUNDATIONS OF INTEGRATING COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN EFL CLASSROOMS

Yuldasheva Dilfuza Kodirovna,
Senior Lecturer, Department of English Language and Literature
Namangan State University, Namangan, Uzbekistan
doi:https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23414393

Abstract: This article examines the linguodidactic foundations of integrating Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and environmental education in university English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. The study employs theoretical analysis, comparison, synthesis, and methodological modelling rather than experimental investigation. It clarifies how environmental topics can provide meaningful contexts for developing communicative competence and proposes a five-stage instructional model: environmental contextualization, linguistic preparation, communicative interaction, collaborative problem-solving, and reflective assessment. Discussion, debate, role-play, and information-gap tasks are analysed in relation to specific language functions. The proposed model aligns environmental content with linguistic objectives while assessing communication and environmental understanding separately. The article offers practical guidance for designing interdisciplinary EFL lessons and identifies questions for future empirical validation.

Keywords: communicative language teaching; environmental education; linguodidactics; EFL; communicative competence; sustainable development.

Introduction

Communicative competence is a principal objective of contemporary English language education. University students are expected not only to understand grammar and vocabulary but also to express ideas, negotiate meaning, interpret information, and participate in academic and social interaction. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) addresses these aims by placing purposeful language use at the centre of the instructional process (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

At the same time, environmental challenges have increased the importance of sustainability-related education. Climate change, water scarcity, air pollution, biodiversity loss, and plastic waste offer relevant contexts for interdisciplinary learning. UNESCO (2017) emphasizes that education for sustainable development should equip learners with competencies for understanding complex problems and making informed decisions. In EFL classrooms, such issues can provide authentic purposes for discussion, argumentation, comparison, and collaborative problem-solving.

However, inserting environmental vocabulary or reading passages into language lessons does not in itself constitute systematic integration. Without explicit language objectives, ecological topics may displace communicative practice; without relevant environmental content, communication tasks may remain superficial. The methodological challenge is to align themes, language functions, classroom interaction, and assessment within a coherent teaching sequence.

The aim of this study is to examine the linguodidactic foundations of integrating CLT and environmental education and to propose a compact instructional framework for university EFL classrooms. Specifically, it identifies shared theoretical principles, classifies environmental communicative tasks, and formulates assessment recommendations. Its guiding question is: How can environmental themes be organized to support meaningful English communication while preserving the educational value of environmental learning? The contribution is methodological: a transparent alignment of content, communicative function, task, and assessment, rather than an untested claim of increased achievement.

Materials and Methods

The article is a theoretical-methodological study based on conceptual analysis and pedagogical modelling. It does not involve a classroom experiment, participant sample, or quantitative data. The principal methods are (a) theoretical analysis of communicative competence and sustainability education, (b) comparison of their instructional objectives, (c) synthesis of compatible principles, and (d) development of a task-based framework. Foundational CLT publications, the CEFR Companion Volume, and UNESCO guidance provide the conceptual basis (Canale & Swain, 1980; Council of Europe, 2020; UNESCO, 2020).

Communicative competence encompasses more than formal correctness: learners must use appropriate linguistic resources in particular situations and employ strategies when communication becomes difficult (Canale & Swain, 1980). In practice, CLT encourages information exchange, interaction, authentic purposes, and attention to both fluency and accuracy. Environmental education, by comparison, develops understanding of sustainability challenges together with reasoned evaluation and responsible participation (UNESCO, 2017).

The two orientations intersect when students use English to identify an environmental problem, request evidence, evaluate alternatives, defend a position, and reach an agreed recommendation. An environmental task is linguodidactically valuable when it creates a genuine communicative need and supplies an appropriate level of linguistic challenge. The CEFR action-oriented perspective supports the treatment of students as social agents who use language to accomplish meaningful tasks (Council of Europe, 2020).

The proposed model applies four design principles. First, communicative purpose must be stated explicitly: for example, comparing alternatives rather than merely memorizing terminology. Second, environmental content must be accurate, relevant, and manageable for students' linguistic levels. Third, tasks should progress from scaffolded preparation to increasingly independent interaction. Fourth, assessment should distinguish proficiency in English from accuracy of environmental reasoning. These principles were translated into a five-stage teaching sequence and illustrative task matrices.

Results

The conceptual analysis indicates that different environmental themes lend themselves to different communicative functions. Topics should therefore be selected on the basis of both their relevance to students and the language practices they can generate. A water conservation lesson may emphasize recommendations and conditionals; a renewable energy lesson may emphasize comparison and justification. This dual alignment helps preserve the language-learning purpose of interdisciplinary lessons.

Table 1. Alignment of environmental themes and communicative objectives

Topic	Communicative function	Language focus
Climate change	Explain causes; predict effects	Cause–effect connectors
Water conservation	Give advice; propose action	Modals and conditionals
Plastic waste	Negotiate feasible solutions	Agreement and suggestions
Renewable energy	Compare and justify options	Comparatives; evaluative language

Five-stage linguodidactic framework

Stage 1: Environmental contextualization. The teacher introduces a recognizable problem through a short authentic text, question, photograph, or local case. Students activate their existing knowledge and identify what they need to discuss. A guiding question might be: "How can our university reduce single-use plastics?" At this point, the objective is to establish a meaningful reason for communication, not to evaluate scientific expertise.

Stage 2: Linguistic preparation. Learners receive focused vocabulary and functional expressions appropriate to the task: "One reason is…", "I would recommend…", "The main drawback is…", or "Could you clarify…?" Brief guided practice may address modal verbs, causal connectors, and discourse markers. The support should be sufficient to enable participation but not so extensive that students simply reproduce a prepared script.

Stage 3: Communicative interaction. Students exchange information or defend viewpoints through pair discussion, role-play, debate, or information-gap work. Interaction should demand listening and response, not parallel monologues. The teacher monitors task completion and notes recurring language difficulties for later feedback.

Stage 4: Collaborative problem-solving. Students work toward a shared outcome, such as a waste-reduction proposal, energy-saving plan, or awareness campaign. Groups must evaluate feasibility, discuss trade-offs, agree on priorities, and present reasons for their decisions in English. This stage connects communicative practice with informed environmental reasoning.

Stage 5: Reflection and assessment. Students review how effectively they communicated and what they learned about the environmental issue. Peer feedback and teacher commentary focus on fluency, coherence, vocabulary, accuracy, interaction, and strength of reasoning. These criteria should not be conflated: agreement with a teacher's environmental opinion must not determine language scores.

Discussion activities develop expression of opinion and spontaneous response, whereas structured debates support argumentation and respectful disagreement. Role-plays can simulate a meeting among students, administrators, and community representatives. Information-gap activities assign different facts to each participant, making genuine information exchange necessary. A problem-solving task requires learners to compare options and negotiate a joint decision. Importantly, each activity requires a specified communicative outcome and timely language feedback.

Table 2. Illustrative communicative tasks in EFL environmental lessons

Activity	Classroom task	Language outcome
Discussion	Identify local sources of pollution	Express and support opinions
Debate	Should campus plastics be restricted?	Persuade; rebut politely
Role-play	Campus sustainability committee	Negotiate and clarify
Information gap	Compare separate waste reports	Ask for and provide information
Group project	Design a water-saving proposal	Explain and justify decisions

Assessment can combine an analytical speaking rubric with a separate content-oriented checklist. Language criteria include intelligibility, interactional responsiveness, organization of ideas, lexical appropriateness, and grammatical control. Environmental criteria include factual

accuracy, relevance of evidence, and plausibility of proposed solutions. The teacher may employ self-assessment and short reflections to identify the communicative strategies students used. Such assessment remains formative unless the indicators are further standardized and validated.

Discussion

The proposed framework connects CLT with environmental education through purposeful task design. Whereas conventional topic-based activities may ask students to reproduce information, an integrated communicative task requires learners to perform a social action: request information, compare competing explanations, negotiate a plan, or present a justified recommendation. This distinction is consistent with the communicative orientation described by Richards and Rodgers (2014) and with the CEFR emphasis on interaction and mediation (Council of Europe, 2020).

Environmental topics are pedagogically useful because they offer multiple viewpoints and familiar problems, yet they pose challenges. Specialized terminology may overwhelm students, and controversial topics may discourage participation. The teacher should therefore select accessible source materials, provide vocabulary scaffolding, create space for different perspectives, and evaluate reasoning rather than conformity. Learning objectives should specify both the environmental issue and the English communicative functions practised in the task.

The conceptual contribution of the five-stage sequence is its explicit alignment of context, linguistic preparation, interaction, problem-solving, and reflective assessment. It also clarifies the boundary between language instruction and content education: environmental topics are not substitutes for language goals but vehicles for meaningful practice. UNESCO (2020) encourages educational responses to sustainability challenges, yet any claim that this model enhances measurable student performance requires classroom evidence.

Future research could compare communicative performance before and after an intervention, analyse learner interaction, and test separate language and environmental assessment instruments. Such research would clarify both effectiveness and implementation conditions.

Conclusion

This theoretical-methodological study has examined how environmental education can be integrated into Communicative Language Teaching in university EFL classrooms. Its central finding is a conceptual rather than statistical one: environmental themes can be systematically aligned with language functions, meaningful interaction, and transparent assessment. The proposed five-stage framework organizes contextualization, linguistic preparation, communicative interaction, collaborative problem-solving, and reflection into a coherent instructional sequence.

The model offers a practical basis for designing discussions, debates, role-plays, and information-gap tasks around sustainability issues without losing sight of communicative competence. Since no experimental data were collected, the framework should be regarded as a reasoned pedagogical proposal requiring empirical validation in diverse EFL settings.

References

1. Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. Applied Linguistics, 1(1), 1–47. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/I.1.1
2. Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment—Companion volume. Council of Europe Publishing.
3. Dilfuza, Y. (2025). Effectiveness of cooperative learning in teaching speaking in English classes. Multidisciplinary and Multidimensional Journal, 4(1), 43-47.

4. Kodirovna, Y. D. (2022). Peculiarities of teaching English based on a communicative approach to students of the Tourism department. International journal of pedagogics, 2(10), 68-71.
5. Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). Approaches and methods in language teaching (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
6. UNESCO. (2017). Education for Sustainable Development Goals: Learning objectives. UNESCO.
7. UNESCO. (2020). Education for sustainable development: A roadmap. UNESCO. https://doi.org/10.54675/YFRE1448
8. Wals, A. E. J. (2014). Sustainability in higher education in the context of the UN DESD: A review of learning and institutionalization processes. Journal of Cleaner Production, 62, 8–15. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2013.06.007
9. Yuldasheva, D. (2023). The importance of listening comprehension materials in the development of communicative competence of tourism students.". Science Shine" International scientific journal, 8(1).
10. Yuldasheva, D. The importance of cooperative learning and group work in english classes. Zbiór artykułów naukowych recenzowanych, 100.