

The Role of English Language Textbooks in Environmental Education

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Abstract

Many people tend to limit the function of language textbooks to the teaching of language skills and language components (i.e., reading, listening, speaking, writing, grammar, and vocabulary). By contrast to the former point of view, this paper argues that the role of language textbooks far exceeds the classical mission of teaching language per se. In fact, we think that language textbooks have a social responsibility too. Language textbooks need to teach students about different aspects of civic education, including environmental education (EE). Also, we believe in the potential of all language textbooks (English, Amazigh, Arabic, French, Spanish language textbooks, etc.) in promoting EE, with a particular focus on English language teaching (ELT) textbooks for this paper. So, in theory, we defend the capability of language textbooks in addressing environmental concerns. Unfortunately, in practice, former textbook analyses reflect that the vast majority of textbook evaluators are not satisfied with the anthropocentric results they end up finding. As a result, we choose to react to the dissatisfaction of textbook evaluators and to contribute to the discussion by proposing an alternative interpretation on how the anthropocentric results can be viewed otherwise, especially in a way that makes them look more useful and more valuable.

1. INTRODUCTION

Many tend to associate environmental education with science textbooks only. Others believe that it would be much better if language textbooks stick to the task of English language teaching/learning. Some ELT practitioners themselves think that it is not their job to be knowledgeable about topics of an environmental nature, and/or to teach students about the environment. Unlike these views, this paper aims to highlight and emphasize the ability of English language textbooks to tackle environmental issues.

This review article aims to answer two main questions.

Q1: What is the role of English language textbooks in environmental education, according to previous studies?

Q2: What is the role of English language textbooks in environmental education, according to our opinion?

Briefly touching on the first and the second questions, the vast majority of textbook evaluators are not satisfied with the anthropocentric results they end up finding in environmental content. Former textbook evaluators kick off their argumentation by stating that their countries' reforms, policies, and mandates regarding EE are fine on paper. Yet, in reality, the implementation and integration of EE in ELT textbooks is problematic, due to sociopolitical factors and/or curricular constraints_ leading to depoliticized or generic representations of environmental issues, especially when topics intersect with state and corporate interests.

In this paper, we choose to react to the dissatisfaction of textbook evaluators and to contribute to the discussion by proposing an alternative interpretation on how the anthropocentric results can be viewed positively, especially in a way that makes them fit into Morocco's EE reforms, policies, and mandates. Therefore, in this paper, we go from the premise that the implementation and integration of EE in Moroccan ELT textbooks do not contradict Morocco's EE reforms, policies, and mandates.

Nevertheless, before delving into the details of the two major questions that this article seeks to answer, it is essential to provide a brief background on Morocco's national context regarding EE. Morocco has made substantial legal, institutional, and curricular efforts to embed environmental education (EE) and sustainable development (SD) principles within its national education system.

At the international level, Morocco is a signatory to key frameworks such as the 1/Rio Declaration, 2/Agenda 21, 3/the Kyoto Protocol and 4/the Paris Agreement, and participates in 5/UNESCO's Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (GAP-ESD) through the Global Schools Program (2020), in partnership with the Mohammed VI Foundation for Environmental Education (FM6E). Furthermore, Morocco joined the 6/Eco-Schools initiative in 2006 under the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), empowering students to become environmental leaders. 7/The advocacy of King Mohammed VI for EE spans multiple forums, including the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, and various international gatherings addressing drought, water security, and biodiversity, such as the 2023 Abidjan summit.

Domestically, Morocco hosted 8/COP22 in Marrakech, 2016. On this occasion, King Mohammed VI delivered a landmark keynote emphasizing the need to unify EE efforts and elevate environmental awareness as vital for the future of humanity. Furthermore, EE is enshrined in major legal and policy instruments: The 9/National Charter for the Environment and Sustainable Development, announced on Earth Day 2010 and codified through 10/Law 99-12 in 2014, mandates the integration of EE in formal curricula, public awareness programs, and teacher training. The 2011 Moroccan Constitution further reinforces this through Articles 31 and 71, granting citizens the right to a healthy environment and obligating the state to uphold environmental protection standards. These efforts are complemented by the Education Strategic Vision 2015–2030 and the 11/National Strategy for Sustainable Development (SNDD, 2017–2030), both of which promote EE across disciplines.

2. THE ROLE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS IN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ACCORDING TO PREVIOUS STUDIES

According to previous studies, the role of English language teaching (ELT) textbooks in environmental education (EE) is debatable. On the one hand, a large part of the findings suggest that textbooks play an unfavorable role in EE. On the other hand, other findings, however few they are, imply that textbooks have indeed the potential to play a positive role in EE, and here we argue that the environmental content of good quality has to be indicated and valued more and more by textbook evaluators.

2.1.ELT textbooks with environmental content of poor quality

2.1.1. International studies

Jacobs and Goatly (2000) conducted a study on the extent to which 17 South-East Asian ELT textbooks include environmental issues. Of the 17 textbooks, 2 ones did not include any environmental content. In detail, both textbooks with no environmental content were for low proficiency students. Concerning the other 15 textbooks, they contain 2% of environmental content. These 2% not only reflect a low percentage, but they are also limited to the type of environmental material with attitudes that are more or less neutral. In other words, the textbooks are also made up of items that have the potential to disseminate and trigger within the students negative attitudes toward nature. However, the content of this type was not calculated. As Jacobs and Goatly state, "[n]either did we count materials that might generate *hostile* [emphasis added] feelings toward nature" (p. 2). Also, in the same study, Jacobs and Goatly measured the degree to which environmental participation is represented in the textbooks. As a result, they found that only 1% is allotted to activities that require the actual participation of students. Toward the end of their paper, Jacobs and Goatly conclude by arguing that language curricula should incorporate environmental concerns, and that they have to take the task of learning beyond the walls of the classroom.

In addition, Stibbe (2004) deconstructed the meaning behind the environmental discourse of 26 ELT textbooks authored or co-authored by native speakers of English, and used in Japan. According to the results he obtained, Stibbe argues that the examined textbooks are full of instances of shallow environmentalism, with rare examples reflecting deep ecology. To explain, Stibbe defines shallow environmentalism as a philosophy that "refuses to address the underlying cultural, political, and psychological causes" (p.243); "shallow environmentalism suggests that there is no problem in the ideological values being propagated in English education materials" (p.243). In detail, Stibbe states that shallow environmentalism manifests itself in textbooks by the presence and promotion of four negative assumptions. The first ecologically destructive assumption that textbooks support is "the more we consume, the happier we become" (p.246). For Stibbe, textbooks do not show consumerism as the cause behind the environmental crisis. Instead, textbooks encourage directly or indirectly the culture of consumerism and commerce-related interests (which serve political programs) by relating overconsumption to feelings of happiness and joy and by associating a reduction in consumption with sacrifice rather than talking to students about the environment-related advantages of leading a lifestyle that is materially simpler. For example, extracts from textbooks include: "The Dutch say that now their air is getting purer and that their health is better. But (. . .) one simple question: 'Can you (. . .) honestly say that you love your bicycle as much as you love your car?' (I: 7)" (p.247), and "We have to learn to tighten our belts, make sacrifices" (X: 15) (p. 247). Stibbe interprets the spread of the ideology of consumerism, and says that the sector of ELT and ELT textbooks in Japan is seen as a tool for marketing Western products and as an opportunity to help circulate and advertise the merchandise of the West, with the goal of attracting and targeting a new niche (i.e., in this case: Japanese customers). The second ecologically destructive assumption that textbooks back up is that non-human beings have no intrinsic worth; their value comes rather from extrinsic sources. To paraphrase, non-humans are not respected for what they are, and start to matter only when they relate to human domains/interests. Unfortunately, the ecosystem, with its different species, has no inherent value, and the life of the ecosystem is acknowledged only when it touches human life areas (e.g., economy, nutrition, building, tourism, etc.). Instances from textbooks are presented in what follows: coral reefs¹ are referred to as "underwater supermarkets" (X: 80) (p.248), animal and plant species are reported as "food- and fiber-producing organisms" (T: 1) (p.248), and trees are depicted as "timber² resources" (A: 45) (p.248). To explain, in the previously-mentioned examples, non-humans gain their value in terms of what they can provide to humans. Likewise, in other sentences, the loss of lives of other species counts only when it impacts the different sectors of human life negatively (e.g., "The oil polluted thousands of Brackets [K]ilometres of coast. . . and killed countless sea plants and animals in important

¹ Coral reefs are underwater structures made up of plants, and they are home to multiple marine species.

² Timber is wood for building/carpentry.

fishing areas. Thousands of people whose jobs depended on clean seas and tourism lost money (C: 69)" (p.248). The third ecologically destructive assumption that textbooks advocate is anthropocentrism and the idea that people are at the center of the universe (e.g., "We must protect the world for ourselves and future generations. Shouldn't our children be allowed the pleasures of clean air, natural forests, healthy food, and wild animals? (C: 3)" (p. 250); "Much of what humans do with *their* [emphasis added] biological resources – including ... species harvested from natural populations (T: 13)" (p.246)). Furthermore, textbooks express this anthropocentric philosophy by mentioning exclusively the impact of ecological damage upon humans, or by prioritizing the impact on humans over the impact on other species when choosing to refer to both parts. Here are the examples that illustrate the two cases: "desertification ... has had ... a devastating effect on regional economies and social conditions (Y: 20)" (p.249); "Air pollution has serious effects on human health, historical structures, masonry, brickwork, metal, sculptures and forests (R: 27)" (p. 250). As it can be noticed, human welfare is always placed first. Then, caring for the ecosystem and its components either comes after or does not come at all. And, the fourth ecologically destructive presumption that textbooks embrace is the misrepresentation of local/indigenous people. This is expressed by blaming local people for environmental destruction, whereas powerful Western factors/values that contribute significantly to environmental deterioration are neither criticized nor talked about. Moreover, there is an inappropriate representation of aboriginal people that reinforces cultural imperialism in a clever way (e.g., describing indigenous environmental knowledge as primitive in comparison to Western standards and science). Stibbe brings his paper to a close, and states that textbooks have to include alternatives from the traditional Japanese culture, namely concepts from Buddhism, Zen, Taoism, and haiku that are not only in harmony with nature, but are also far from shallow environmentalism that the ELT textbooks contain.

Moreover, Jacobs et al. (2006) describe the two guiding principles that directed the design of a higher education environmentally-based Indonesian ELT textbook³. A fundamental principle the textbook builds upon is the positive approach. According to the explanation by Jacobs et al., the positive approach aims at highlighting the positive role of human beings in saving nature. In this regard, Jacobs et al. report the rationale justifying the adoption of the positive approach as stated by the textbook designers: "We felt that many environmental education lessons take too much of a doom-and-gloom attitude. We worried that students and teachers would already feel helpless to effect environmentally-friendly changes" (p.54). But the problem is that the element of critique that acknowledges the negative role played by humans in environmental deterioration is completely deleted. Besides, Jacobs et al. state that the other principle the textbook is based on is the local approach. In other words, the environmental issues addressed within the textbook are limited to the local context. This takes away from students the opportunity to learn about global ecological issues.

Furthermore, Akcesme (2013) carried out research on a corpus of 120 texts taken from 7 international ELT textbooks in order to learn about the way in which environmental knowledge is represented. Concerning the results, the textbooks tend to decontextualize the addressed environmental issues from their socio-economic and political milieu by sticking to short linguistic structures such as the phrase and/or the sentence. Furthermore, textbooks rarely present animals as able to direct their actions upon the outside world. As for plants, no information about them is included. In addition, in the textbooks, the manner in which nature is portrayed reflects anthropocentrism in many ways. First, textbooks transmit utilitarianism to the students. For example, nature is framed as (1) an object for scientific research, (2) a space for amusement and relaxation in free time, (3) a commodity with a market value (e.g., the case of ecotourism), (4) an object of gaze⁴, and (5) a provider for human needs. Second, nature in textbooks is given human qualities. For instance, there is (6) the personification of nature (also known in technical terms as anthropomorphism), and (7) the presentation of man-made natural

³ Jacobs et al. served as editors only; it is a group of 17 lecturers from 10 Indonesian universities who designed the textbook.

⁴ An object of gaze is an object to be observed, seen, and photographed.

environments⁵. Third, nature is displayed in a way that "beautifies" the image of human beings. In detail, nature is depicted as (8) in need of human protection. This implies that nature is weak, that it cannot protect itself by itself, and that it needs another power (i.e., humans) to save it, all of which is wrong and helps feed human exceptionalism in students. Likewise, another point that helps "enhance" the image of human beings and helps "take away" the responsibility of humans toward environmental destruction is the frame of nature as 9 an adversary and a threat to humans (e.g., wild animals, and natural disasters). Here, textbooks describe nature as evil and humans as the innocent beings. Fourth, textbooks promote a type of relationship between humans and nature that is similar to a conqueror/superior being and a conquered/weak being, which also reflects anthropocentrism. Akcesme ends the article by arguing that ELT textbooks should not reinforce the systems and the ideologies that caused environmental problems in the first place. Instead, ELT textbooks should communicate clear environmental messages, promote environmental ethics, encourage students to pay careful attention to their behaviors toward the environment, raise awareness about the exploitative and cruel treatments of human beings toward nature, motivate the learners to build a closer relationship with their environment, and teach them to appreciate nature in its own right⁶. In order to help attain these goals, Akcesme recommends the use of reading, listening, speaking, and writing activities, and not to fill the pages of the textbooks with purposeless images.

Also, Xiong (2014) analyzed the environmental dimension in the top 5 best-selling Chinese high school ELT textbook series, which comprise a total of 28 textbooks. According to the analysis, 4 textbook series (22 textbooks) have less than 4% of their volume devoted to the question of the environment. As to the 5th brand (6 textbooks), it includes no environment-related material. So, the results that follow concern the former 4 textbook series. Firstly, only 2% of the environmental content encourages students to undertake real, active environmental participation. Secondly, Xiong found that textbook designers hide the responsibility of humans regarding environmental destruction. In detail, in the textbooks, the deletion of human agency is made possible through the use of the passive structure and nominalization.

Thirdly, Xiong observed that there is an excessive use of linear solutions to environmental problems. In this regard, Xiong explains the negative consequences of overusing a linear problem-solution pattern. Drawbacks include making environmental problems look trivial by neglecting their complex dimension, making it hard for the learner to think about alternative solutions given that the recommended solutions look like final responses, leading students to believe that the environmental problems can be tackled directly and satisfactorily, and "making it more difficult for them [the students] to reflect on the dominant taken-for-granted obsession with material growth, which is ecologically unsustainable" (p. 239). Fourthly, Xiong does not like the way in which textbooks portray a positive image about the important role played by the Chinese government in environmental protection, and praise the environmental actions of the Chinese government quantitatively and qualitatively by using words such as *many* 'excerpt 6), *soon* 'excerpt 7), and *useful* 'excerpt 8). This is "suggesting to students that they can rely on their government for environmental protection" (p.240). Moreover, Xiong agrees with the conviction that environmental issues are policy problems, and he does not like the fact that textbooks remove the political character of environmental problems. In the opinion of Xiong, textbooks reduce the question of the environment to a technical problem that can be fixed using technology, and to a matter that should be solved at the level of the individual as well as his/her habits as a consumer. These representations of environmental issues are "raising the question of whose knowledge and whose interests are served in these textbooks" (p.240). In the end, Xiong argues that language teaching has a social responsibility to challenge students to think more critically about environmental matters. Besides that, Xiong recommends, in the same way that Stibbe (2004) suggested for the Japanese context, that environmental education in Chinese ELT textbooks can be addressed using the Chinese culture, namely Daoism (also spelled with

⁵ Examples of man-made natural environments are parks, zoos.

⁶ For its own right means for its own sake; not in terms of the benefits that people can derive from it.

a T: Taoism). Taoist beliefs stress a harmonious relationship with nature, and can add a philosophical dimension and deep ecology to the textbooks, according to Xiong.

Besides, Jodoin and Singer (2018) examined the environmental data of ELT textbooks that are frequently taught in Japanese higher education, using an analytical model called KPV (knowledge, social practices, and values) originally developed by Clément (2006). The first finding is that the texts and images (K) do little to challenge the environmental social practices (P) or the environmental values (V). The textbooks provide students with a type of knowledge (K) that is informative in nature, factual, and scientific. Nevertheless, this environmental knowledge (K) does not challenge the long-held established values and behaviors of students that could be harmful to the environment. In other words, the adopted pedagogy does not lead to transformative learning (i.e., in this case, learning that leads to the transformation of bad environmental behaviors into eco-friendly behaviors). The second finding is the lack of interconnectedness between the image and the topic/text/activity it accompanies. In detail, 42% of the images (that is, nearly half the quantity of images) are either indirectly related to the content they accompany or have a decorative purpose. The third finding is that the lesson plans are successful from a language teaching point of view; however, from the angle of education for sustainable development (ESD), the lessons fail. Indeed, no mention was made in the forward or in any part of the textbooks concerning the intention of the textbook designers to integrate ESD; the only objective that was mentioned is to improve the English language skills of the students. In this regard, Jodoin and Singer believe the integrated ESD content to be incidental. What is more, the numerical analysis of the corpus revealed the frequency of some words according to the following order: people (231 times), water (161), animals (140), species (135), energy (105), pollution (89), endangered (83), global (79), plants (78), warming (66), habitat (65), rain (65), forests (61), population (55), and human (54). Interestingly, those quantitative results reflect anthropocentrism, considering that the word *people* ranks first in the middle of the environmental data.

Additionally, Mohammadnia and Moghdam (2019) explored the extent of alignment of 18 Iranian ELT textbooks with sustainable development principles. Results show that the distribution of sustainable development themes across the textbooks is not balanced. In fact, some textbooks enjoy a wide representation of themes related to sustainability. Meanwhile, in other textbooks, themes of sustainability are totally absent. Nevertheless, even with textbooks consisting of sustainability themes, the most represented category is "Cultures and Spiritual Practices" with a percentage of 19.1%. To paraphrase, environmental sustainability is not the most frequent dimension in the textbooks. So, as examples of recommendations, Mohammadnia and Moghdam suggest that more attention needs to be given to the theme of climate change (Cl C) that happened only three times and to the theme of renewable energy sources (Re ER) that occurred only once, taking into account that the three dimensions of sustainability (i.e., social, economic, and environmental sustainability) are equally important.

In another piece of research, Hamed (2021) studied the environmental content in Egyptian ELT textbooks. Results are mixed depending on the level to which the textbooks belong. In particular, the environmental content of poor quality was associated with textbooks of middle school and high school. First, there is the omission of human agency concerning environmental deterioration, and the emphasis on the positive role of human beings in saving nature by contrast. Indeed, the environmental discourse of textbooks is marked by the use of verbs in the passive voice (e.g., endangered), which helps in the erasure of human agency. Meanwhile, the verb 'protect' is repeated many times, implying that the survival of nature is conditioned by humans who will protect it. Second, the textbooks contain a large amount of anthropocentric reasoning (e.g., animals are metaphorically framed as possessing human-like features, reasoning that reflects an age of consumerism, etc.), and anthropocentric values such as utilitarianism (e.g., using nature for the sake of relaxation) and domination. Third, there is a prevailing environmental philosophy of shallow environmentalism and the absence of an eco-ethical consciousness. Fourth, textbooks promote a theoretical, abstract type of environmental participation for students. The use of statistics marks the fifth, textbooks for upper grades.

These statistics help disguise the harm that humans have done to nature. For instance, "[f]acticity⁷ of information is established by reporting the percentage of animals that have escaped extinction" (p.295), raising the question of why not report instead the percentage of animals that could not help escape extinction?

What is more, Obi et al. (2021) performed a textbook evaluation on 27 Nigerian middle school ELT course books. Results indicate that the category of environment displayed the most across the textbooks is the social environment. Generally speaking, Obi et al. also found that the presentation of the environment-related categories in textbooks is done according to the following sequence: (1) social environment, (2) abiotic⁸ environment, (3) neutral environment, and (4) biotic⁹ environment. In total, the social class is mentioned 393 times in 26 textbooks, the abiotic class is mentioned 71 times in 21 textbooks, the neutral class is mentioned 38 times in 20 textbooks, and the biotic class is mentioned 4 times in 3 textbooks. So, the social category comes first, similar to Mohammadnia and Moghdam (2019), who found that the most represented category is "Cultures and Spiritual Practices". Commenting on the results, Obi et al. consider the act of concentrating on what is social at the detriment of what is biotic to be an unhealthy perspective. Besides, Obi et al. think that the number of times allotted to the biotic aspect is too small, and will not make students properly informed about the environmental challenges, such as the biodiversity loss that the biotic components face. Therefore, Obi et al. believe that it is necessary that textbooks provide more information in relation to the biotic category that is at the heart of environmental discussions, with the aim of raising a generation of environmental ambassadors who will be enlightened enough about various environmental problems. Obi et al. also hold the opinion that the neutral category should be given more attention.

Most importantly, the neutral category will help students develop respect and responsibility toward nature so that they and the generations to come can live well. Obi et al. finish their paper by saying that the level of environmental awareness in the textbooks will not bring about the desired change in the attitudes of students towards their environment, and make three other suggestions. Obi et al. propose that textbook designers talk about the celebration of important days such as World Environment Day, make reference to conservation clubs in order to help students assimilate a spirit of environmental ethics, and try to connect environmental awareness with culture and religion to reach immunization.

In another article, Osokina (2022) did research on how education for sustainable development (ESD) is represented in 181 Russian university ELT textbooks. Of the 181 analyzed textbooks, only 61 (33.7%) contain topics related to sustainability. Therefore, for the remaining 120 textbooks, sustainability issues are absent. For more details, results varied depending on the genre of the textbook. To clarify, all English for general purposes (EGP) textbooks were found to include at least one topic about sustainability. And, "among them [EGP textbooks], there is a subtype of textbooks intended for humanities (. . .) students" (p. 63). Yet, one sustainability issue is not sufficient. Concerning English for specific purposes (ESP) textbooks, the situation differs.

On the one hand, ESP textbooks of some specific majors do not cover sustainability development (SD) issues at all, namely music, IT, accounting, psychology, and dentistry¹⁰.

On the other hand, there are ESP textbooks of other majors that include more than one topic in relation to sustainability. These include ESP textbooks for students of ecology and biotechnology, agriculture, veterinary science, medicine (aside from dentistry), economy (aside from accounting), advertisement, tourism, transport, sociology, public relations, and law. Statistically, each textbook from this class of textbooks has 70% to 20% of its content coverage dedicated to ESD. But, despite the presence of quantity for this subgroup of ESP

⁷ Facticity refers to the state or the quality of being a fact.

⁸ Abiotic refers to non-living things such as temperature, sunlight, water, wind, minerals, humidity, altitude, soil, atmosphere, and climate.

⁹ Biotic refers to living things: fauna, flora, and decomposers.

¹⁰ Dentistry is the branch of study through which students become dentists.

textbooks, quality is next to absent in both EGP and ESP textbooks. In fact, the most frequent type of tasks that Russian ELT textbooks in universities depend on a lot is comprehension questions, with an amount of 60%. According to Osokina, assignments related to comprehension check understanding for the text and language comprehension, and help students to practice speaking, which is totally fine according to the perspective of language pedagogy. Nonetheless, Osokina states that the exercises of comprehension do not encourage the growth of critical thinking skills, reflection, problem solving, and evaluation.

Furthermore, comprehension questions do not boost the level of motivation in students to help them lead sustainable lives. By contrast, writing activities (e.g., essays) that help progress and advance the development of critical thinking skills are the least frequent in the examined textbooks (4%). And, for textbook activities like presentation, report, and project, there is none (0%). Besides, some ESD issues like 'hunger', 'innovation', and 'communities and cities' are absent. Another issue is that the Russian university ESP textbooks concentrate on exercises to practice the language of the field or the career that students specialize in (e.g., Business English, English for tourism purposes, etc.). Apart from that, the 181 Russian higher education ELT textbooks were compared against 69 Russian secondary education ELT textbooks that include materials for both regular high schools and vocational high schools. Compared to higher education ELT textbooks, secondary education ELT textbooks have more than twice the quantity of sustainability content as well as more textbook activities with the potential to develop critical thinking skills. In fact, far from the post-secondary ELT textbooks with only 4% for writing tasks, secondary education ELT textbooks have 20%.

What is more, unlike the post-secondary ELT textbooks in which activities of presentations, reports, and projects are absent (0%), secondary education ELT textbooks devote 5% to each. And, in contrast to post-secondary ELT textbooks, secondary education ELT textbooks are made up of more games, more questions to discuss, and more role plays in relation to ESD. Therefore, Osokina concludes that Russian secondary education contributes more to awareness about sustainability issues than is the case for Russian tertiary education. Besides that, the 181 Russian higher education ELT textbooks were compared against 16 foreign ELT textbooks designed and produced in the UK and the US. And, Russia uses those foreign ELT textbooks either in higher education or secondary education levels, depending on the needs of each educational language program. Osokina found that foreign ELT textbooks outperform the Russian university ELT textbooks. For instance, they are composed of 70% writing tasks; a generous proportion that will surely contribute to the improvement of critical thinking skills. As for questions of comprehension, foreign ELT textbooks do not rely much on them. They only dedicate 25% to them because they do not help advance the ESD objectives that much. To summarize, even after coming up with an ESD-related educational policy in 2005 called 'the National Strategy of Education for Sustainable Development in the Russian Federation', Osokina believes that Russian university ELT textbooks were not able to overcome the problems of SD content that they already had in them.

Further, Gusnaini et al. (2023) checked ecology-related reading material in 2 Indonesian high school ELT textbooks, one used for class X¹¹ and the other for class XI. Data indicates that class X has a little more content than class XI. In detail, class X has 3 items to be read (2 texts and 1 paragraph), whereas class XI has only 1 text. As far as class X is concerned, the components to be read are titled 'Tanjung Putting National Park', 'Coban Rondo', and 'Niagra Falls'. As for class XI, the reading text is titled 'Global warming'. Gusnaini et al. describe the ideas around which the texts revolve. In the first place, 'Tanjung Putting National Park' talks about Camp Leaky that exists in the mentioned park. The camp represents the efforts made by the government of Indonesia to build wildlife conservation sites for orangutans¹² that were previously kept in a state of captivity. Besides, the text explains in detail how to arrive at the

¹¹ In the educational system of Indonesia, common core is referred to as class X (a.k.a., 10th grade). Class XI (a.k.a., 11th grade) refers to the 1st year baccalaureate. And, class XII (12th grade) refers to the second year baccalaureate.

¹² Orangutan is a type of monkeys characterized by its orange color.

camp, how much it takes to reach it, and how far it is. In the second place, 'Coban Rondo' is a text that describes the beauty of the Coban Rondo waterfall, which exists in Indonesia. Moreover, the text informs the learners that they have to keep the waterfall clean when visiting it, as part of nature management. In the third place, 'Niagra Falls' is a paragraph that refers to the three interconnected waterfalls that make up Niagra Falls, namely the Horseshoe Falls, the American Falls, and the Bridal Veil Falls, as well as to the facilities next to the waterfalls, such as the theatre and the historical monuments. In the fourth place, 'Global warming' discusses the damage caused by global warming on the economy and on the air and the water that nature provides us with, and invites students to protect the planet. As a final point, Gusnaini et al. argue that a common issue between textbooks for class X and textbooks for class XI is that both have an insufficient number of reading sections, and both are characterized by a lack of concern toward the environment.

2.1.2. Moroccan studies

Talking about studies that researched environmental education in Moroccan ELT textbooks in depth, we are citing four major papers: Mliless and Larouz (2018), M'rabti (2020), Larouz et al. (2021), and Laaloua and Tamer (2022).

Out of 7 Moroccan high school ELT textbooks¹³, Mliless and Larouz (2018) examined 14 reading texts about the environment. Results of the study confirmed the three hypotheses that Mliless and Larouz formulated at the beginning. The results demonstrated that (1) euphemism, (2) the lack of real agency, and (3) the presence of passive voice are used in a way that mitigates the environmental dangers caused by humans, and in a way that keeps the negative role of humans (individuals, and firms/groups) in environmental deterioration out of sight. Moreover, euphemism, absence of agency, and presence of passive voice are employed in a way that makes it difficult for students to have a full understanding of the discussed environmental phenomena. To elaborate on the last point, "the language of texts, which is said to promote students' awareness and critical thinking towards the preservation of the environment as well as being a means to denunciate destructive behaviors that threaten the equilibrium of the ecosystem, becomes vague and ambiguous due to euphemistic structures" (p.111). Likewise, the presentation of vague/fake agents can lead students to a state of confusion. Similarly, when the by-phrase—which identifies the agents—is omitted in passive constructions, the sentence loses clarity and becomes semantically incomplete. Aside from this, instances of euphemism include "extinction of wildlife species" and "manipulation of the forest". In these cases, euphemism is highlighted by the choice of the words *extinction* and *manipulation*. According to Mliless and Larouz, instead of employing the terms *killing* and *destruction*, the nouns *extinction* and *manipulation* were chosen in order to soften the degree of fault and blame that can be directed to humans.

Furthermore, examples illustrating the lack of real agency comprise "waste and rubbish is what people throw away", "poor people and loggers are responsible for forest deforestation", and "sea levels are rising". For the sake of clarity, the three cases indeed have grammatical agents represented by *people*, *poor people and loggers*, and *sea levels*; nevertheless, from a semantic point of view, the agents are not valid. To explain, the word "*people*" conveys a vague agency. Similarly, the phrase "*poor people and loggers*" expresses a biased agency because it puts the blame solely on the socio-economic class of people with low incomes. Identically, "*sea levels*" is correct as a grammatical agent; however, the motive that triggers sea levels to rise is not specified. In sum, the three examples illustrate a deceiving agency while the real doers of the actions are not stated. As for the passive voice, the representative cases are "Marine life has been largely open for exploitation" and "Many species have been or are being driven towards extinction". As for the percentages, texts about pollution include 45% of structures in the passive voice, texts about energy include 30% of passive voice, and texts about deforestation include 25% of passive forms. Unlike the structure of sentences of passive voice with agents,

¹³ (Gateway to English 1 2006, Ticket to English 2014, Outlook 2016, Ticket 2 English 2016, Ticket to English 2017, Insights into English 2017, Ticket 2 English 2017).

those structures in textbooks are of passive voice without agents (a.k.a., agentless passive voice) in which the by-phrase is omitted.

Last but not least, of the examined 14 texts, the majority of texts (N=11) address environmental issues at a global level. And, the rest of the texts, which represent a small number, talk about environmental problems at a local/regional/national level. Taking this into consideration, Moroccan students may fail to have a clear idea about the environmental concerns in their country. Consequently, Mliless and Larouz recommend that textbook designers need to include more regional and national environmental content. Taking all the previously mentioned elements into account, researchers draw the conclusion that the creators of the Moroccan ELT textbooks did not pay much attention to the type of texts they chose to incorporate, especially texts that do not go hand in hand with the objectives of the EE pedagogy. Consequently, researchers recommend that textbooks need to be heavily reconsidered, and that special committees need to supervise the work when the rectification is being implemented. Lastly, it is noteworthy that the results found by Mliless and Larouz (2018) are in total agreement with the findings in the study of M'rabti (2020). M'rabti assessed the environmental education content of 3 Moroccan ELT textbooks. Results indicate that the curriculums use passive voice and nominalization with the purpose of hiding the true agent behind environmental deterioration, together with few local environmental references.

Besides that, Larouz et al. (2021) looked into the issue of the environment in 3 Moroccan high school ELT textbooks¹⁴. At first glance, the researchers found that each of the three analyzed textbooks assigns a unit to the subject of environment. In other words, on the surface, one unit per textbook appeared to be adequate considering the overall design of the materials. "It should be accounted for, however, that despite the designers' claim that the whole units revolve around the theme of environment, most of the lessons and pages devoted to the EE have no relation whatsoever with the environmental theme" (p.14). For instance, Larouz et al. mention that the unit from the 2nd year baccalaureate ELT textbook, *Gateway to English 2*, has only two lessons allotted to the environment, namely the introduction to the unit and the reading part. Besides that, assessment of textbooks shows that environmental problems are treated in reference to international contexts, while Moroccan environmental troubles are not addressed, except for one local item related to the theme of natural disasters. The same problem applies to unreferenced images, in which the setting (i.e., whether it refers to the Moroccan context or elsewhere) is not stated clearly. In the opinion of Larouz et al., this unethical practice by textbook designers appears to be a deliberate attempt to conceal Morocco's environmental reality, as it deceives students into thinking that Morocco is not concerned by environmental worries. According to Larouz et al., concentrating on foreign environmental concerns as well as images with ambiguous locations can affect students negatively, taking into consideration that they will be merely learning about issues happening in remote/fictional contexts instead of reading about issues happening in local/regional/national contexts that connect to them more as Moroccans. Furthermore, Larouz et al. use ecolinguistic and semiotic analyses to argue that "[t]he occurrence of certain linguistic features, namely nominalization, verbs, and passive voice indicates a willingness to hide the real agent or the responsible behind the action" (p.1). In detail, nominalization is a linguistic process by which action verbs (a.k.a., dynamic verbs = verbs that describe an act) can be transformed into nouns (e.g., the action verb 'pollute' can be replaced by the noun 'pollution'); this gives the possibility for agents not to be named. And, in this regard, Larouz et al. notice that nouns outnumber action verbs. Speaking of the latter, results demonstrate that relational verbs (a.k.a., linking verbs: a subtype of stative verbs) are greater in number than action verbs within the three textbooks. For the sake of clarity, based on a linguistic point of view, relational verbs (e.g., the verb to be) are important and perform the grammatical function of linking. However, from an EE perspective, action verbs do a better job because they refer to the executed processes/behaviors. Last but not least, the passive voice structure is also problematic because it does not name the agents (i.e., doers of actions) behind

¹⁴ *Outlook* (2005), *Ticket to English* (2006), and *Gateway to English 2* (2015)

the destruction of the environment. According to Larouz et al., the use of nominalization, relational verbs, and passive voice may discourage the students who want to know the causes (agents/actions) behind the situation of the environment. With the absence of reference to real causes, Larouz et al. state that the consequence is that students will not be able to identify real solutions as well. Besides that, Larouz et al. present a bunch of statistics for each textbook regarding some characteristics. First, in terms of the total amount of environmental content in each, *Outlook* has 8.8%, *Ticket to English* has 9.38%, and *Gateway to English 2* has 9.4%. Second, in terms of nominalization, *Outlook* has 38 items, *Ticket to English* has 31 items, and *Gateway to English 2* has 27 items. Third, in terms of the type of number of the linking verbs, *Outlook* has 80, *Gateway to English 2* has 51, and *Ticket to English* has 47. Fourth, in terms of passive voice structure, *Gateway to English 2* has 21 items, *Ticket to English* has 19 items, and *Outlook* has 7 items. By these numbers, Larouz et al. believe that the quality of textbooks is not good. In fact, even *Outlook*'s smallest number of passive voice structures are interpreted by Larouz et al. as follows: "This minor manifestation of passive voice in *Outlook* may be due to the fact that the text with passivation requires more complex processing (...). This might be the case since common core students have not been introduced to the passive voice." (p. 15). Lastly, Larouz et al. argue that the process of textbook design needs to take into account many factors in order to ameliorate the textual and visual environmental components of the textbooks. As such, the researchers give four recommendations. First and foremost, textbook designers must organize the environmental units in a way that respects and reflects their objectives. Second, textbook creators have to include ecological issues about Morocco. Third, the real causes/agents behind the current environmental situation ought to be stated with clarity. Fourth, specialists in the field should supervise the design of the textbooks.

Last but not least, Laaloua and Tamer (2022) quantified the degree of integration of environmental education in 3 Moroccan high school ELT textbooks¹⁵. Laaloua and Tamer obtained the following statistics: 9.58% for the category of environment preservation (EP), 4.79% for the category of pollution (PO), 4.24% for the category of ecosystems and cycles (EC), and 3.09% for the category of use of resources (UoR). For the first category of EP, detailed percentages of its sub-categories are 'simulating participation in environmental activities' (2.06%), 'activating the efforts of ministries/environmental agencies/NGOs' (2.01%), 'use of clean energy' (1.42%), 'enacting and applying environmental laws/legislations' (1.03%), 'preserving the beauty of the environment' (1.03%), 'combatting environmental pollution' (0.89%), 'waste recycling' (0.57%), 'combating desertification' (0.42%), and 'rationalization of water consumption' (0.42%). For the second category of PO, detailed percentages of its sub-categories are 'water pollution' (1.96%), 'air pollution' (1.27%), 'soil pollution' (0.85%), 'acoustic pollution' (0.42%), and 'food contamination' (0.28%). For the third category of EC, detailed percentages of its sub-categories are 'the relationship of humans with the environment' (2.94%), 'definition of the environment' (0.98%), and 'environmental imbalance' (0.33%). And, for the fourth category of UoR, detailed percentages of its sub-categories are 'plant depletion' (1.26%), 'wildlife extinction' (0.84%), 'solar uses' (0.57%), and 'uses of water' (0.42%). What is more, these percentages are scattered unevenly across the textbooks depending on the level to which they belong. In fact, textbooks for lower grades contained more environmental knowledge than those for higher grades. In detail, *Visa to the World* (i.e., a Moroccan ELT textbook designed for the common core) contains more environmental content than *Ticket to English* (i.e., a Moroccan ELT textbook designed for the 1st year of baccalaureate). Besides, *Ticket to English* of the first year baccalaureate has more environmental content than *Ticket 2 English* of the second year baccalaureate. In numerical terms, *Visa to the World* has 9.66% of its content devoted to EE, *Ticket to English* has 7.1%, and *Ticket 2 English* has 5.21%. According to Laaloua and Tamer, the findings are not only insufficient, but also superficial because they are purely informative and do not cater for the needs of Moroccan high school students in terms of providing a deep level of environmental knowledge, raising environmental

¹⁵ *Visa to the World* (2016), *Ticket to English* (2009), and *Ticket 2 English* (2007)

awareness, developing pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors, and teaching environmental skills such as critical thinking that will help students to participate in solving environmental problems of the 21st century. Laaloua and Tamer conclude by recommending that future versions of Moroccan ELT textbooks have to include EE content of good quality and in a good quantity.

In a nutshell, according to the literature, the environmental content of low quality takes many forms. Qualitatively speaking, the content is anthropocentric, superficial, gives rise to negative attitudes toward nature, does not conform to the principles of eco-pedagogy, and is biased. Quantitatively, the content is minimal or absent. To recapitulate, the first characteristic is of anthropocentrism (e.g., Stibbe, 2004; Akcesme, 2013; Xiong, 2014; Jodoin & Singer, 2018; Mliless & Larouz, 2018; Hamed, 2021). Anthropocentrism is manifested through utilitarianism (nature is framed as a space for amusement, relaxation, a commodity with a market value (e.g., through ecotourism, and the culture of consumerism) that reinforces economic growth, and a provider for human needs). In other words, the value of the ecosystem is indicated by the extent of its external transactions with the world of humans, reflecting that the natural world has no internal worth. Also, anthropocentric discourse is strengthened through the invasion of nature, domination, superiority, and the idea that people are at the center of the universe. The second characteristic is of superficiality (e.g., Xiong, 2014; Jodoin and Singer, 2018; Laaloua and Tamer, 2022). This is shown through the excessive use of direct linear solutions toward environmental problems, and stopping at the stage of informing students without challenging harmful environmental ideas or encouraging students to employ critique. The third characteristic is of hostile attitudes toward nature (e.g., Jacobs and Goatly, 2000). The fourth characteristic is the failure of lesson plans from the point of view of attaining EE objectives (e.g., Jodoin and Singer (2018), Larouz et al. (2021), and Osokina (2022)), by depending more on good lesson plans from the point of view of language pedagogy, focusing on language goals, including a lot of comprehension questions, and including relational verbs which have a pure grammatical function. Furthermore, EE objectives are not met when displaying more theoretical/abstract forms of environmental participation (e.g., Jacobs and Goatly (2000), Xiong (2014), and Hamed (2021)). The fifth characteristic is bias favoring more powerful groups (e.g., Xiong, 2014; Mliless and Larouz, 2018; M'rabti, 2020; Larouz et al., 2021), and/or discrimination against less powerful groups such as local people and the poor (e.g., Stibbe, 2004), Mliless and Larouz (2018). The sixth characteristic concerns minimal content on the whole (e.g., 2% (Jacobs and Goatly, 2000), and less than 4% (Xiong, 2014)), or keeping information to the minimum by not mentioning the socio-economic and/or the political milieu of environmental situations in written data (e.g., Akcesme, 2013) and by placing unreferenced images without referring to the exact place (e.g., Larouz et al., 2021). Otherwise, in other cases, there is a total absence of content. For example, 2 textbooks did not include any environmental content, as reported by Jacobs and Goatly (2000); a textbook series having 6 textbooks in total has no environment-related material, as claimed by Xiong (2014); and sustainable development issues are absent from 120 Russian course books, as stated by Osokina (2022).

2.2.Environmental content of good quality within ELT textbooks

In the literature, even if the amount of environmental content of good quality is very small in comparison to the 'undesirable' type of content, it is present. But, while some textbook evaluators admit its presence and its worth, others fail to see its importance and/or do not highlight it. Therefore, we argue that good points should be acknowledged and celebrated, even if they are in the format of very few scattered instances.

2.2.1. Good quality in international ELT textbooks

First, in the study by Jacobs and Goatly (2000), 41% of activities talk theoretically about environmental participation. In details, 16% are reading/listening activities that tell the stories of participation of other people, 9% of the tasks tackle potential participation by asking students to describe the manner through which they would or could participate, 6% are reading/listening

activities that urge students to participate, 6% of assignments request from students to act as if they are participating using imitation and role plays, 2% of exercises ask students to report situations in which they participated or in which their classmates did, and 2% invites students to share stories of participation carried out by other people they know, apart from themselves and their classmates. In our opinion, we believe these results may contribute to the growth of environmental awareness among students. Unfortunately, even if Jacobs and Goatly report the presence of the previously mentioned findings, they do not highlight their potential utility. Instead, they choose to focus only on the idea that 1% of hands-on participation is small.

Second, in contrast to Jacobs and Goatly (2000), who did not pay a lot of attention to the usefulness of the abstract forms of participation, Stibbe (2004) acknowledges the presence of examples about deep ecology, although they are few. Indeed, of the 26 textbooks he analyzed, and in the middle of the dominating paradigm of shallow environmentalism that Stibbe found, the researcher admits that textbook U¹⁶ goes to the source of the ecological problems. Instances comprise "Even with safety measures, approximately 155.000 sea turtles drown in shrimp nets each year" (Textbook G: 13) (p.252), and "Thousands of trees and animals have died, and forest people have lost their homes so that today North Americans can eat cheap meat" (Textbook S: 15) (p.252). Concerning these extracts, the first and the second quotes show more or less care for the loss of non-human life (sea turtles, and trees and animals), and reflect that the life of other beings must be respected for what they are and not in terms of what they can offer to the human. Furthermore, both quotes recognize the cause that led to the death of species (the nets that people fabricate in order to catch shrimps¹⁷, and wanting to offer cheap meat for the benefit of North Americans at the expense of thousands of animals). Both imply that people are the ones to be held responsible for the loss of species. Besides, the second quote puts the impact of the ecological damage brought to non-human beings first. Then, when it refers to the effect of ecological destruction on human beings (i.e., forest people), it is not done in a way that reflects anthropocentric thinking. Rather, it is tackled in a way that indicates cultural imperialism of North Americans over the indigenous people living in the forests.

Third, we cannot deny that the local approach reported by Jacobs et al. (2006) in the textbook they edited will certainly increase the environmental awareness of students concerning issues that surround them. It is beautiful to see indigenous environmental knowledge celebrated in textbooks (e.g., traditional herbal medicines and Sasi tradition¹⁸). And, maybe the positive approach can indeed make students feel hope and will encourage them to act. It is worth noting that these are good elements too. What we are trying to say is that the two approaches should not be adopted in an extreme way that reflects an all-or-nothing decision, as the textbook designers claimed. We argue that textbook designers need to be open-minded enough to include elements from international contexts as well, because global dynamics actually affect what is local, too.

Furthermore, the optimistic approach has to be mixed with the reality around. In this way, the textbook will have more potential in the mission of environmental education. Besides that, to come up with the idea of designing an environmentally-based ELT textbook for the level of university is a good initiative and a big step already that we praise.

Fourth, Xiong (2014) admits detecting a small amount related to the philosophy of deep ecology in the middle of the abundant examples that are of relevance to shallow ecology. For example, the textbook includes an interview with a member who belongs to an environmental group, in which the activist advocates the need for a radical change to take place regarding consumption and production. Other than that, based on the analysis of Xiong and the way he reports the findings, it seems that he wants textbooks to address criticism of the Chinese government and to make the latter responsible. Indeed, Xiong comments that "The eco-critical

¹⁶ Stibbe refers to the 26 textbooks he analyzed by the use of letters from A to Z (Textbook A, textbook B... textbook Z).

¹⁷ Shrimps are marine species and are classified as sea fruits.

¹⁸ Sasi tradition is a ritual followed by the indigenous in which they stop consuming natural resources for a period of time in order not to fall in over-exploitation.

discourse analysis found textual evidence of (...) trivializing ecological issues by stressing only (...) and only positively representing the government's role in the handling of environmental issues" (p.240). But our question to Xiong is: Do you have any concrete counterevidence supporting that the Chinese government is responsible for environmental destruction? We guess the answer is no. So, in the absence of real proofs, we argue that textbook evaluators will need to be diplomatic when carrying out content analysis and will need to do it professionally and carefully, or remain at a distance from getting political, and especially stay away from accusing governments. Otherwise, it can become dangerous.

Fifth, some of the reviewed textbooks have environmental themes of worth at least on the surface, and this has to be acknowledged. For example, according to the study conducted by Mohammadnia and Moghdam (2019), even if the classification of sustainable development themes in Iranian ELT textbooks reveals that environmental sustainability does not come first, it does not mean that there are no environmental themes at all. In fact, there is the category of life diversity LD (9.5%), saving natural resources Sv NR (9.5%), endangered species End Sp (9.5%), pollution Pol (8.2%), and recycling Rec (5.4%), reflecting amounts that are more or less acceptable. The only question that remains is whether the quality of the included content is good, taking into consideration that detailed information about the content of each and every category is missing.

Sixth, Urlica et al. (2019) wrote a paper in which they tell us about the idea of their project that is still in progress. Urlica et al. seek to design an ESP textbook for students in the life sciences (agriculture, biology, genetic engineering, horticulture¹⁹ ...). To be more precise, the aim of the textbook they intend to design is for students to learn about issues related to sustainability. Urlica et al. voice their intention to incorporate in the final version of the textbook domains such as global ecology, living systems theory, biosemiotics, history and philosophy of science (HPS), ecolinguistics, and a pedagogy that is based on content-based instruction (CBI), communicative language teaching approach (CLT), the construction of concept maps, the fostering of thinking skills, and values such as respect for the diversity of life. So, from what it appears, we predict the final version of the ESP textbook to be good, especially if elements such as history and philosophy of science, together with thinking skills, are really implemented. Seventh, concerning the study of Hamed (2021), a reasonable amount of environmental content of good quality was associated with ELT textbooks for lower grades. In the textbooks of the kindergarten, Hamed (2021) found that nature is framed as a fundamental component of the life system. Also, in the textbooks of the primary school, nature is framed as a stimulus to reflect on the similarities between humans and non-humans. Besides, after employing the analytical framework of Kellert and Kahn (2002) in order to describe the type of values textbooks promote toward nature, findings by Hamed suggested that textbooks of kindergarten and primary school both succeeded in promoting compositional, moralistic, and humanistic²⁰ values. To explain, the compositional refers to the creation of a balanced relationship with nature, the moralistic is related to moral values toward nature, and the humanistic sees nature as an occasion for people to connect with their humanity through connecting with the environment. Additionally, textbooks for lower grades encourage the growth of the identity of nature lovers in children and teenagers, and feed the curiosity of the latter to experience nature. Eighth, unlike Obi et al. (2021) who argue that "It was concluded that the practice of emphasising social and abiotic environments issues at the detriment of others do not auger well for proper development and impartation of environmental awareness to students" (p.62), we have the conviction that what is social can affect what is environmental. So, the two categories should not be looked at separately. Actually, if the two are connected when being taught, we are sure that it will increase the environmental awareness of students. This also applies to Mohammadnia and Moghdam (2019), who analyze the category of cultural and spiritual practices separately rather than in connection to the environment. In addition, the abiotic category, which is relevant to ecology, can undoubtedly contribute to raising students'

¹⁹ Horticulture is the science and art of garden cultivation and plant agriculture.

²⁰ The term humanistic does not mean anthropocentric.

environmental awareness. However, Obi et al. focused solely on the negative aspects, overlooking the potential educational value of both social and abiotic categories.

Ninth, contrary to the results found by Obi et al. (2021) and Mohammadnia and Moghdam (2019) and the way they interpreted them, Osokina (2022) reports finding the environmental constituent first in order. So, at least in terms of quantity, this is good. In fact, we praise the fact that in Russia, environmental content comes first in ELT textbooks. However, Osokina (2022) does not seem to appreciate the situation. In fact, Osokina wants to see the rest of the sustainable development issues presented separately from what is environmental (e.g., "The problem of responsible consumption is not presented as a separate topic in any books, but resource consumption is discussed within such topics as the environment and natural resources". (p. 62). And, it is her point of view after all. But, the way we see it is that it is a valuable finding that ELT textbooks succeeded in connecting what is environmental to what is social. In particular, we believe so because that practice reflects content related to deep ecology. Tenth, it is true that Gusnaini et al. (2023) came to the conclusion that the number of reading parts about the environment is not enough (i.e., 4 readings in total), and their content does not express concern for the environment. In fact, their study is totally devoted to examining reading sections. Yet, at the end of their paper, Gusnaini et al. mention that "it can be concluded that there is still a lack of environmental awareness material (. . .), especially in descriptive texts [s]. Actually, several discussions contain elements of caring for the environment, usually in the form of questions and discussions" (p.518), which is good.

2.2.2. Good quality in Moroccan ELT textbooks

Previous Moroccan studies tended to highlight more what is negative than what is positive, and we totally respect their approach. But we argue that positive elements should be talked about equally. First and foremost, to have Moroccan ELT textbooks is something to be proud of already. In fact, not so long ago, Moroccans used to study English using textbooks written by foreigners. And, before delving into the quality of the environmental content, just the matter of fact of having textbook units with titles of direct relevance to the theme of environment is already a good step toward spreading environmental education. Apart from that, in the same way we recommend Xiong (2014) not to accuse the Chinese government for standing behind environmental destruction, we think that researchers in Morocco (e.g., Mliless and Larouz (2018), M'rabti (2020), and Larouz et al. (2021)) would better not accuse textbook designers of hiding and trying to protect some people (such as companies, and groups), and not to accuse the creators of textbooks of trying to conceal and manipulate the Moroccan reality, just on the basis of the ecolinguistic analyses they carried out. In fact, if the same linguistic structures (e.g., passive voice and euphemism) are re-analyzed using another perspective, they can be seen as rather helping to advance the EE. For instance, we strongly argue that the deletion of the by-phrase in the passive voice can be read as having the intention to develop the critical thinking skills of students, because it will push them to think more deeply about the doers of action.

Moreover, we urge Mliless and Larouz (2018), M'rabti (2020), and Larouz et al. (2021) to draw more and more attention to 'favorable' content as well. As an example, Mliless and Larouz (2018) accentuate the idea that texts about pollution include 45% of structures in the passive voice, texts about energy include 30% of passive voice, and texts about deforestation include 25% of passive forms. Still, they forget to point out the fact that having texts talking about themes of pollution, deforestation, and energy is a good starting point from which further things can be developed and/or ameliorated. In this regard, a good example to follow would be Ait Bouzid (2020), who indicates both what is good and what still needs to be worked on. For more details, in his paper, Ait Bouzid explored global citizenship in 3 Moroccan second-year baccalaureate ELT textbooks. Global themes are classified into three main learning domains: the cognitive, the socio-emotional, and the behavioral. And, each domain includes several themes. In particular, the behavioral learning domain was found to involve the theme of environment. Commenting on the whole list of global citizenship themes present in the

materials, Ait Bouzid says "They [the analyzed Moroccan ELT textbooks] have set a good example to follow by textbooks from other subjects so that global citizenship will be integrated across the curriculum as a major cross curricular theme" (p.240), admitting the effort being made, on the one hand. And, he adds "In short, the three textbooks testify for the fact that Global Citizenship Education is at its initial stages in Morocco" (p.240), suggesting that some details have to be improved, on the other hand. Moreover, in another sentence taken from within the analysis of the results, Ait Bouzid writes "activities integrated in writing and speaking activities usually ask learners to plan or suggest actions to be taken either to solve or promote some aspects of global citizenship, but they rarely ask them to reflect critically about these aspects" (p.239), showing two sides of the same coin. These comments are relevant to multiple themes on global citizenship, including the environmental theme. And, we did not want to paraphrase them in order to mirror the difference between his ways of analysis versus other ways (which we absolutely respect, yet which we differ with). Actually, critique is an art. And Ait Bouzid knew how to accomplish it elegantly, and especially without hurting the feelings of anybody.

Last but not least, we highly recommend studies to avoid/be careful when making definite conclusions, and to be relative instead. By way of illustration, Larouz et al. state "most of the lessons and pages devoted to the EE have *no* [emphasis added] relation *whatsoever* [emphasis added] with the environmental theme" (p.14), a sentence in which terms such as *no* and *whatsoever* would better be deleted. Indeed, we find similar terms to be frightening. And, we believe a part of the lessons and pages Larouz et al. talked about to be, at least, of an indirect relevance to the subject of the environment, if not a direct one. In this case, if what we think proves to be true, the decisive tone of inference by Larouz et al. will be "ethically wrong".

3. THE ROLE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS IN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION, ACCORDING TO OUR OPINION

Even if findings by the previous studies (i.e., both international and Moroccan studies) tend to reflect the inclination of ELT textbooks to have an unfavorable type of nature-related content, we still maintain a neutral point of view and refuse to provide a value judgment about the situation of environmental content in Moroccan ELT textbooks, for the time being. This is because of three reasons. First, as researchers, we do not want our opinion to be impressionistic; we want it to be informed by valid and reliable results that we will find out by ourselves after carrying out the process of textbook evaluation²¹. Second, we cannot adopt the view presented in the results of Mliless and Larouz (2018), M'rabti (2020), Larouz et al. (2021), and Laaloua and Tamer (2022) for the simple reason that they only concern a small sample from the range of Moroccan ELT textbooks that exist in the market. To reiterate, although Mliless and Larouz (2018) worked on 7 textbooks, which is 'more or less' a good representative number, their study is restricted to 14 reading passages. As to M'rabti (2020), she worked on 3 textbooks. And, the same thing applies for Larouz et al. (2021) and Laaloua and Tamer (2022). Besides, for the four studies, the sample of the assessed textbooks is limited to the high school level.

As a consequence, the results cannot be generalized to Moroccan ELT textbooks of middle school and primary school. Third, even if we want to hold the conviction or forward the hypothesis that the Moroccan ELT textbooks contain a large proportion of environmental content of low quality right from this moment, the perspective that the Moroccan researchers adopted totally differs from the theoretical framework we intend to adopt. To explain, for Mliless and Larouz (2018), Larouz et al. (2021), and M'rabti (2020), they used ecolinguistics exclusively. Besides, although Laaloua and Tamer (2022) claimed to use a mixed-methods approach, their work appears to align more closely with a quantitative research paradigm. Anyways, for us, the analytical tools and the research questions we wish to investigate differ. So, our results and/or our interpretation will differ from theirs.

²¹ With reference to the project of thesis.

Additionally, we argue that the very few instances of good environmental content from previous works represent hope; hope that one day, the environmental content of good quality becomes a defining orientation in the vision of ELT textbooks all over the world. It also makes us aspire that the textbook evaluation that we will be carrying out will, at least, come up with some environmental content of good quality. What is more, we hold the conviction that the ELT textbooks can offer so much potential regarding EE. We have faith in the idea that the textbook, no matter which subject (English language, Amazigh language, Arabic language, Islamic education, history/geography, civic education, French language, etc.), is a good agent of change. So, this is applicable to ELT textbooks as well. Yet, in parallel, the textbooks can become full of bias. But here, we insist on the idea that neither do we accuse textbook designers of hiding the real doers of environmental destruction, nor do we accuse special parties/groups of standing behind environmental deterioration (cf. Xiong (2014), Mliless and Larouz (2018), and Larouz et al. (2021)). In this regard, we have to clarify ourselves; what we meant is that textbooks might reflect anthropogenic ideas, in which case they will reflect bias toward humans (perceived as a whole) over nature. Besides that, ELT textbooks can become full of bias due to the nature of the English language itself. And, we take the opportunity to refer to the special situation of the English language, given that it is the language of countries most powerful in business, industry, technology, and science. So, the environmental content of ELT textbooks "might become contaminated". Will these matters of fact (i.e., English as the lingua franca in domains of business and science) "infect" the representation of environmental content within ELT textbooks designed locally for the sake of Moroccan students?! This is what our project will aim to discover later.

Nonetheless, a question that we want to introduce for now, and that may change everything upside down, is: What if there is no environmental content of bad quality? What if the environmental content considered as 'bad' in the eyes of the majority of textbook evaluators does not mean that textbooks are promoting/teaching bad environmental attitudes? What if it just means that textbooks are simply trying to reflect, mirror, and simulate scenarios from reality with all sincerity? Should the textbook present a utopian vision, maybe one that will never take place in reality, in order to be categorized as having environmental content of good quality? Is life, after all, not a mixture itself of the good and the bad? What if the analyzed textbooks actually belong to the genre of authentic materials and are just adopting a lifelike approach? We will leave those as open questions for the time being, and as an open invitation for readers to think with us about this alternative vision. And, we promise that we will attempt to answer this dilemma while interpreting the results of the study to be carried out²².

Meanwhile, we have to admit that a sentence that we came across in the paper of Yastibas (2020) is what sparked the birth of the questions asked in the previous paragraph. It is only one sentence, but it was so powerful that it succeeded in provoking us in a good way. The sentence reflects Yastibas's interpretation of his findings. In his work, Yastibas argued that "students can understand the relationship between people and nature by studying this course book" (p.24). To explain the particularity of this sentence, we will provide the context in which it came. Yastibas (2020) investigated nature-related content in a Turkish ELT textbook. Results reported by Yastibas included themes such as outdoor sports exercised in nature (e.g., skiing, and horse-riding), the negative effects of natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes) on the life of humans, how variations in weather conditions affects different areas of human life (e.g., what people wear, eat/drink, and do), eco-touristic places in Turkey (e.g., Butterfly Valley) and elsewhere in the world (e.g., Victoria Falls), what vegetables, fruit, and food affect the health of people positively/negatively, the positive role of humans in taking care of animals (through adopting pets, and building zoos), and one single case in which human activities are depicted as the cause behind the situation of endangered species, namely polar bears. Except for the last point related to polar bears, we are sure that many textbook evaluators would have interpreted the rest of the results either as portraying anthropocentric and utilitarian values toward nature

²² With reference to the project of thesis.

or as promoting a negative image of nature. Many would have seen the textbook as reinforcing situations of an unhealthy relationship between people and nature, and would predict that students will reproduce the same negative attitudes/scenarios toward nature because of the textbook. Surprisingly, Yastibas came up with a different reading for the identified results and commented that "students can understand the relationship between people and nature by studying this course book" (p.24). When reading his interpretation at the very beginning, it felt weird because Yastibas presented a unique interpretation that is different from the rest. But after rethinking about his opinion several times and after trying to understand why he said so, we started to wonder: Is it not true that the Turkish ELT textbook will indeed present an opportunity for the students to understand/realize that the genuine elements that govern the relation of people toward nature are utilitarianism (e.g., outdoor activities, holidays, benefits of some foods), and dislike (e.g., natural disasters, unfavorable variations in weather conditions, negative impacts of some types of food on human health)? This made us question ourselves: Is the Turkish ELT textbook not a good example of authentic and real-life like teaching material considering that it reflects the reality of the relationship between people and nature? To sum up, the sentence by Yastibas had a strong impact on us, and on the need that we have to re-digest everything we have been exposed to so far, namely the system of categories of good vs bad environmental content. And, what if we can reach the possibility to remove this categorical thinking altogether, and replace it with a more inclusive reality-based system?

4. CONCLUSION

To summarize, the essay talked about two main issues: a) the role of ELT textbooks in EE, according to the literature; b) the role of ELT textbooks in EE, according to our opinion. First, according to the literature, the type of environmental content that dominates the most in the ELT textbooks is of poor quality. In the opinion of textbook evaluators, this is the general paradigm. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that there are also instances of environmental content of good quality, however few and scattered they are. Second, in our opinion, we contributed to the debate by providing an alternative interpretation to the results considered as "bad" environmental content. To be more precise, we proposed that the aim of the "bad" environmental content is not to promote bad environmental attitudes/behaviors. Rather, its aim is to reflect reality as it is.

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²³ CNRST (Morocco): In French, it is the abbreviation for {Centre National de Recherche Scientifique et Technique}_ translated to English as [National Center of Scientific and Technical Research].

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²⁴ The alphabetical order of the 7th edition of APA style ignores the apostrophe

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