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REPRESENTATION OF ECOPEDAGOGY IN INDONESIAN LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS FOR GRADE 3 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT
Environmental education at the elementary school level needs to be developed not only through the delivery of ecological knowledge, but also through the formation of concern, responsibility, critical awareness, and concrete actions towards the environment. Indonesian language textbooks have the potential as a medium for integrating language literacy and ecological literacy because environmental issues can be presented through texts, stories, questions, activities, and language tasks. This study aims to analyze the representation of ecopedagogy in the textbook Bahasa Indonesia: Kawan Seiring untuk SD/MI Kelas III (Edisi Revisi) by Gantino Habibi and S. Nailul Muna Aljamaliah. The study uses a qualitative approach with a qualitative content analysis method for texts, dialogues, questions, instructions, and learning activities related to the environment. The analysis uses deductive coding based on six categories operationalized from the thinking of Freire, Gadotti, and Misiaszek, namely ecological awareness, human-nature relations, ecological ethics and care, ecological responsibility, ecological critical awareness, and ecological action. The results of the study indicate that the six dimensions are present in the textbook with a strong tendency towards ecological care, responsibility, and action, while critical awareness emerges primarily through the causal relationship between human behavior and environmental damage. The findings indicate that the Indonesian language textbook for third grade has the potential to be an ecopedagogical medium that integrates language skills with the formation of students' ecological awareness.
Keywords: *Ecopedagogy, Ecological awareness, Environmental literacy, Indonesian language, Textbooks*

1. Introduction

Environmental issues increasingly appear in educational materials, but the presence of environmental topics alone does not necessarily constitute ecopedagogy. Environmental education may provide information about pollution, waste, forests, or conservation, whereas ecopedagogy asks how learners are positioned in relation to ecological problems, how human–nature relations are represented, how responsibility and care are constructed, and whether texts create space for reflection and action. In this sense, ecopedagogy is concerned not only with what learners know about the environment but also with how ecological realities are interpreted and connected to everyday social life (Freire, 2000; Gadotti, 2008; Misiaszek, 2016).

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This distinction is particularly relevant to Indonesian language textbooks because ecological meanings can be embedded in language-learning practices rather than presented as a separate environmental subject. Reading texts, vocabulary, questions, instructions, dialogues, reflection tasks, and classroom activities can simultaneously function as linguistic resources and as spaces in which environmental values and perspectives are constructed. Previous studies have examined ecopedagogy in elementary education and Indonesian language learning, as well as environmental themes in educational materials, but these studies do not fully explain how the dimensions of ecopedagogy are represented within a specific Indonesian language textbook for elementary learners (Adzani et al., 2024; Samsiyah, 2024; Gavilan Tatin et al., 2024).

Research on textbooks also shows that learning materials can shape the ways sustainability and ecological issues are framed. Studies of school textbooks have examined the treatment of sustainability, environmental issues, and ecological language, but their analytical emphases differ: some focus on sustainability education, some on environmental content, and others on ecolinguistic or critical discourse perspectives (Andersen, 2018; Mohammadnia & Moghadam, 2019; Micalay-Hurtado & Poole, 2022; Al Darayseh & AlHawamdeh, 2024). These approaches are valuable, but they do not by themselves provide a focused account of the combination of ecological awareness, human–nature relations, ethics and care, responsibility, critical awareness, and action within an Indonesian language textbook at the Grade III level.

The present study therefore addresses a specific gap at the intersection of textbook research, Indonesian language education, and ecopedagogy. First, the object of analysis is an Indonesian language textbook for Grade III elementary school rather than a science or environmental education textbook. Second, the study uses ecopedagogy as the central conceptual lens rather than treating environmental content as an end in itself. Third, the analysis operationalizes six dimensions that move from the representation of ecological knowledge and relationships toward care, responsibility, critical interpretation, and ecological action. This framework is intended to make visible differences in the depth and function of environmental representations within language-learning materials.

The six dimensions were synthesized from the ecopedagogical perspectives of Freire (2000), Gadotti (2008), and Misiaszek (2016, 2022a, 2022b). Ecological awareness refers to recognition and understanding of environmental concepts and conditions. Human–nature relations concern how interactions between people, the environment, and living things are represented. Ecological ethics and care concern values of respect and concern for the environment. Ecological responsibility concerns expectations or practices related to taking responsibility for environmental conditions. Ecological critical awareness concerns the representation of problems, causes, consequences, evaluation, and connections between human actions and ecological impacts. Ecological action concerns concrete or collective activities directed toward environmental protection, restoration, or improvement. The dimensions are conceptually complementary and may overlap; they are not assumed to form a fixed developmental sequence.

The study examines the textbook Bahasa Indonesia: Kawan Seiring untuk SD/MI Kelas III (Edisi Revisi) by Gantino Habibi and S. Nailul Muna Aljamaliah. The objective is to identify and interpret how the six dimensions of ecopedagogy are represented in the textbook and to examine the degree to which the representations remain informative or normative or extend toward reflective, critical, and action-oriented forms. The contribution is a systematic account of ecopedagogical representation in an Indonesian language textbook

while maintaining a clear distinction between what the textbook represents and what students may actually learn or do.

2. Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with qualitative content analysis. The method was selected because the purpose is to identify, categorize, and interpret meanings represented in a textbook rather than to statistically test relationships between variables. The analysis was conducted deductively and interpretively: the initial coding categories were derived from a synthesis of ecopedagogical concepts, and the coded units were then interpreted in relation to their textual and pedagogical context (Mayring, 2014; Schreier, 2012).

The data source is Bahasa Indonesia: Kawan Seiring untuk SD/MI Kelas III (Edisi Revisi), written by Gantino Habibi and S. Nailul Muna Aljamaliah and published by Pusat Perbukuan, Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah in 2025. The volume analyzed is Volume III and lists ISBN 978-634-00-3315-1. The unit of analysis is a word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, dialogue, question, instruction, reflection task, or activity that carries an identifiable ecological meaning in the learning context.

The study focuses on verbal material. Although the textbook contains illustrations, illustrations were not independently coded as a separate data source. Visual elements were considered only insofar as they helped clarify the context of the verbal material being analyzed. No interviews, observations, or student outcome data were used because the research question concerns representations in the textbook itself.

A verbal unit was included when it met at least one of the following criteria: (1) it presented knowledge or information about the environment; (2) it represented interactions between humans, the environment, or living things; (3) it expressed ecological care or respect; (4) it represented ecological responsibility; (5) it connected human actions with ecological impacts or consequences; or (6) it directed learners toward ecological action. General environmental information was not automatically treated as ecopedagogical. A unit was included when its context carried a meaningful connection to one or more of the operational dimensions. Thus, the occurrence of an ecological word alone was insufficient for inclusion.

The coding sheet was developed from six analytical dimensions: ecological awareness, human–nature relations, ecological ethics and care, ecological responsibility, ecological critical awareness, and ecological action. Each dimension was operationalized through conceptual definitions and indicators. The researcher read the textbook repeatedly, identified candidate units, recorded page locations and paraphrased findings, assigned codes, and compared each unit with the operational definitions. A single unit could contextually contain more than one ecopedagogical dimension; the coding process therefore allowed more than one code when the meaning warranted it. The complete set of coded units is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 presents the complete dataset identified in the analysis. The “Findings/Data” column contains researcher-generated paraphrases rather than direct quotations from the textbook. This distinction is maintained to avoid presenting paraphrased findings as verbatim textual evidence.

Table 1. Coding results

No.	Page	Findings/Data	Code	Category	Indicator
1	20	Do not litter	A1	Ecological awareness	Recognizing ecological behavior
2	20	Students take turns cleaning the classroom	D1	Ecological responsibility	Shared responsibility
3	20	Sorting organic and inorganic waste	D2	Ecological responsibility	Waste management
4	20	Clean classroom makes learning fun	C1	Ecological ethics and care	Respect the environment
5	22–23	Explanation of organic and inorganic waste	A2	Ecological awareness	Environmental knowledge
6	23	Organic waste can be processed into compost	A3	Ecological awareness	Ecological knowledge
7	23	Questions about waste disposal habits	D3	Ecological responsibility	Reflection of habits
8	145	Humans throw rubbish into the river	B1	Human–nature relations	The impact of human actions
9	145	Garbage produces toxic waste	E1	Ecological critical awareness	Cause and effect
10	145	The characters must solve the garbage problem	E2	Ecological critical awareness	Identification of problems
11	145–146	Asking a friend for help	F1	Ecological action	Collective action
12	146	Cleaning the river together	F2	Ecological action	Recovery
13	146	Keeping the river from being polluted again	D4	Ecological responsibility	Sustainability
14	148	Questions regarding key issues	E3	Ecological critical awareness	Identification of problems
15	148	Assess a character's actions and give reasons	E4	Ecological critical awareness	Evaluation
16	149	Finding the consequences of the character's actions	E5	Ecological critical awareness	Cause and effect
17	150	Observing the surrounding environment	E6	Ecological critical awareness	Connecting text–reality
18	150	Observing rivers, drains, and ditches	B2	Human–nature relations	Environmental interactions

No.	Page	Findings/Data	Code	Category	Indicator
19	150	Thinking about how to fix the damage	F3	Ecological action	Solution
20	150	Thinking about how to prevent a dirty environment	F4	Ecological action	Prevention
21	172	Residents throw away and burn garbage	E7	Ecological critical awareness	Problematic behavior
22	172	Smoke from burning makes the air unhealthy	E8	Ecological critical awareness	Cause and effect
23	172	Questions about how to clean the air	E9	Ecological critical awareness	Solution to problem
24	172	Separating organic and non-organic waste	D5	Ecological responsibility	Waste management
25	172	Inviting friends to clean the street	F5	Ecological action	Cooperation
26	172	Planting mango trees	F6	Ecological action	Greening
27	172	Making a compost hole	F7	Ecological action	Waste management
28	172	Residents are aware of the importance of protecting the environment	C2	Ecological ethics and care	Value awareness
29	172	Promise not to throw or burn rubbish	D6	Ecological responsibility	Change of habits
30	172	The village is green and comfortable again	C3	Ecological ethics and care	Positive impact

For consistency in the descriptive distribution, the 30 displayed units are counted according to the category under which they are presented in the complete coding table. The frequency figures therefore describe the displayed coding distribution and are not claims about the proportion of all sentences or pages in the textbook.

Data analysis followed the qualitative procedures of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Data condensation involved selecting and coding units that met the inclusion criteria. Data display was conducted through the coding matrix and category distribution. Conclusions were drawn by comparing patterns across the categories and then relating the findings to the ecopedagogical framework. Validity was supported through repeated reading of the complete textbook, consistent application of the coding definitions and indicators, documentation of page locations and codes, and re-examination of interpretations against the theoretical framework (Mayring, 2014; Schreier, 2012). The coding was conducted by a single researcher; therefore, no inter-coder reliability statistic is reported.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Overview of Ecopedagogy Representation

The analysis identified 30 verbal units that met the inclusion criteria. The representations occur in several forms of Indonesian language learning, including environmental information, questions, instructions, reflections, and activities. The distribution shows that ecological critical awareness is represented in 9 units (30.0%), followed by ecological action in 7 units (23.3%) and ecological responsibility in 6 units (20.0%). Ecological awareness and ecological ethics and care each account for 3 units (10.0%), while human–nature relations account for 2 units (6.7%).

The distribution should not be interpreted as a developmental sequence. The six dimensions are analytically distinct but conceptually complementary, and an individual learning unit can connect knowledge, care, responsibility, critical reflection, and action. The value of the framework lies in showing how environmental themes are given different pedagogical meanings rather than in ranking one dimension as inherently superior.

Table 2. Distribution of Ecopedagogical Representations

Dimension	Frequency	Percentage
Ecological critical awareness	9	30.0%
Ecological action	7	23.3%
Ecological responsibility	6	20.0%
Ecological awareness	3	10.0%
Ecological ethics and care	3	10.0%
Human–nature relations	2	6.7%
Total	**30**	**100.0%**

3.2 Ecological Awareness through Waste Literacy

Ecological awareness appears through explanations of organic and inorganic waste and through simple environmental behavior such as not littering. The material provides basic ecological vocabulary and knowledge that can be used within Indonesian language learning. For example, information about waste classification and composting connects environmental knowledge with language tasks that require learners to understand, discuss, or respond to ecological content.

This representation is primarily informative, but it is not merely an environmental topic detached from learning. The ecological information becomes meaningful because it is embedded in language-learning contexts and is linked to questions about everyday waste practices. This supports the view that textbook tasks can connect sustainability-related knowledge to learners' everyday contexts (Gadotti, 2008; Andersen, 2018). At the same time, the evidence supports a claim about representation in the textbook, not about students actually acquiring the vocabulary or changing their behavior.

3.3 Human–Nature Relations through the Surrounding Environment

Human–nature relations are represented in two units that connect human activity with rivers, drains, ditches, and environmental conditions. One unit depicts people throwing rubbish into a river, while another directs attention to rivers, drains, and ditches in the surrounding environment. These representations position ecological conditions in relation to human practices rather than presenting nature as an isolated topic.

The category is narrower than the critical-awareness category because the focus is on representing interactions between people and their surroundings rather than on fully developed causal or structural analysis. The textbook thus introduces an elementary

relational perspective: environmental conditions are connected to what people do. This is consistent with ecopedagogical approaches that treat human ecological relationships as part of everyday social experience (Misiaszek, 2016).

3.4 Ecological Ethics and Care

Ecological ethics and care appear through messages about maintaining cleanliness, recognizing the importance of protecting the environment, and representing a clean and comfortable village as a positive condition. These units frame environmental care as a value that should be maintained in everyday life.

The representations are predominantly normative-ethical. They encourage learners to value cleanliness and environmental care, but they do not by themselves provide evidence of critical examination of why ecological problems occur. This distinction is important because normative environmental instruction can be a component of ecopedagogy without automatically constituting critical ecopedagogy. The depth of the representation depends on whether learners are also given opportunities to question causes, consequences, responsibilities, and possible responses.

3.5 Ecological Responsibility

Responsibility is represented through shared classroom cleaning, waste sorting, reflection on waste-disposal habits, preventing further river pollution, separating organic and non-organic waste, and promising not to throw or burn rubbish. These units move beyond environmental information by presenting environmental care as something for which people have responsibilities.

The representations are largely practical and normative. They establish expected behaviors and connect environmental conditions with everyday responsibility. However, the data do not demonstrate that students actually adopted these behaviors. The appropriate interpretation is that the textbook represents and encourages responsible conduct. This distinction prevents textbook representation from being treated as evidence of behavioral outcomes.

3.6 Ecological Critical Awareness

Ecological critical awareness is the largest category in the coding distribution, with 9 of the 30 displayed units (30.0%). The category includes representations of problematic behavior, cause-and-effect relationships, problem identification, evaluation, connections between text and surrounding reality, and questions about possible solutions. Examples include the representation of garbage producing toxic waste, smoke from burning rubbish making air unhealthy, questions about key ecological issues, and activities that ask learners to consider the consequences of human actions.

These representations are more than simple environmental facts because they connect human behavior with ecological consequences and invite learners to identify, evaluate, or consider responses to problems. Nevertheless, the criticality remains elementary. The textbook does not substantially invite discussion of structural issues such as economic interests, consumption systems, environmental inequality, or environmental policy. The findings therefore support the interpretation of emerging or elementary problematization rather than fully developed critical-transformative ecopedagogy, particularly in relation to the characteristics of Grade III learners (Misiaszek, 2016, 2022a, 2022b).

3.7 Ecological Action through Collective Action

Ecological action is represented in 7 units (23.3%) through activities such as asking friends for help, cleaning rivers, repairing environmental damage, preventing dirty

conditions, cleaning streets, planting mango trees, and making compost holes. Several of these activities have a collective orientation, showing that ecological improvement can involve cooperation rather than only individual behavior.

The action representations are concrete and appropriate to elementary-school contexts, but they should not be interpreted as evidence that students carried out the actions or that collective action occurred beyond the textbook. In ecopedagogical terms, the material provides an orientation toward action by representing possible responses to ecological problems. This complements the critical-awareness representations because some activities follow a pattern in which a problem is identified, its consequences are considered, and a practical response is proposed.

3.8 Integration of Ecopedagogy with Indonesian Language Learning

A central implication of the findings is that ecological content is embedded within Indonesian language learning rather than functioning as an independent environmental curriculum. Ecological issues appear through vocabulary, reading contexts, questions, instructions, observation tasks, reflection, and activities. This integration matters because the linguistic task and ecological meaning can operate simultaneously: students may encounter environmental vocabulary while interpreting information, identify problems while answering questions, or discuss ecological action through language-based classroom activities.

This finding extends previous work that has identified ecopedagogical possibilities in Indonesian language learning by showing how the ecological dimension can be distributed across multiple forms of textbook activity (Samsiyah, 2024). It also complements textbook research that has examined sustainability and environmental representation in other subject areas by shifting attention to the specific role of a language textbook as a site where ecological meanings are constructed through language practices (Andersen, 2018; Mohammadnia & Moghadam, 2019; Micalay-Hurtado & Poole, 2022; Al Darayseh & AlHawamdeh, 2024).

3.9 Synthesis of the Six Dimensions of Ecopedagogy

The six dimensions can be understood as complementary analytical lenses rather than a fixed progression. The textbook contains informative representations of ecological knowledge, relational representations of human interactions with the environment, normative-ethical representations of care, practical representations of responsibility and action, and reflective-critical representations that connect human behavior with ecological consequences. The synthesis below summarizes the dominant form of representation identified in the coded dataset.

Table 3. Synthesis of the Six Dimensions of Ecopedagogy

Dimension	Form of representation	Character	Interpretive emphasis
Ecological awareness	Types of waste, compost, environment, trees, rivers	Informative	Basic ecological knowledge and vocabulary
Human–nature relations	Interactions between humans, the	Relational	Connection between human

Dimension	Form of representation	Character	Interpretive emphasis
	environment, and living things		activity and surroundings
Ecological ethics and care	Maintaining cleanliness and protecting the environment	Normative-ethical	Values of care and respect
Ecological responsibility	Sorting waste, cleaning, protecting the environment	Practical	Expected responsibility in everyday contexts
Ecological critical awareness	Cause and effect of pollution, burning waste, tree felling, and impacts of actions	Reflective-critical	Problem identification, consequences, evaluation, and solution-oriented thinking
Ecological action	Cleaning, planting, composting, prevention, restoration	Action-oriented	Concrete and collective ecological responses

The synthesis indicates that the textbook moves beyond the simple presence of environmental themes. Some representations remain informative or normative, while others create opportunities for reflection and action. However, the most critical representations remain concrete and close to students' immediate environments. The textbook therefore shows ecopedagogical potential, but the evidence does not justify claiming that it independently develops ecological literacy or produces transformative student outcomes. Such outcomes would require empirical research with learners and cannot be inferred from textbook content alone.

4. Conclusion

This study identified 30 verbal units representing six dimensions of ecopedagogy in Bahasa Indonesia: Kawan Seiring untuk SD/MI Kelas III (Edisi Revisi): ecological awareness, human–nature relations, ecological ethics and care, ecological responsibility, ecological critical awareness, and ecological action. The distribution was 9 units of ecological critical awareness (30.0%), 7 of ecological action (23.3%), 6 of ecological responsibility (20.0%), 3 of ecological awareness (10.0%), 3 of ecological ethics and care (10.0%), and 2 of human–nature relations (6.7%).

The main contribution of the study is to show how an Indonesian language textbook can embed ecological meanings within language-learning materials rather than presenting environmental issues only as separate themes. The representations range from informative and normative forms to reflective and action-oriented forms. Critical representations are visible particularly where human actions are connected with ecological consequences and possible responses, although deeper structural or socio-economic problematization remains limited.

These findings should be understood as evidence about textbook representation, not evidence that students acquire ecological knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors as a direct result of the textbook. The study is also limited to one Grade III textbook, verbal data, and analysis by a single researcher. Illustrations were not independently coded. Future studies can compare multiple Indonesian language textbooks, examine visual-verbal relationships systematically, involve multiple coders, and investigate how teachers and students interpret and use ecopedagogical representations in actual classroom settings.

Pedagogically, the findings indicate that teachers can extend the textbook's existing representations through questions, discussions, reflection, and context-sensitive follow-up activities. Such extensions may help learners move from recognizing environmental information toward considering relationships, responsibility, critical questions, and possible ecological action without attributing student outcomes to the textbook content alone.

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