



## Environmentalism in the English classroom: An autoethnographic analysis of a cinema-based didactic proposal

Estefanía Sánchez Auñón

Departamento de Didáctica de la Lengua y la Literatura (Español, Inglés y Francés). Facultad de Educación. Universidad de Murcia 

Pedro Antonio Férrez Mora

Departamento de Didáctica de la Lengua y la Literatura (Español, Inglés y Francés). Facultad de Educación. Universidad de Murcia 

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**EN Abstract.** Environmental degradation is a global concern with cross-curricular significance. However, it is often absent from English classrooms due to educators' limited pedagogical expertise in this domain. This article endeavours to promote the integration of environmental themes into English language instruction by presenting and analysing an instructional didactic proposal centred on the film *Avatar* (2009). As such, the article explores the principles of eco-education and the possible advantages of employing cinema as an educational tool. The authors implemented a film-based eco-education teaching unit in two high school classes and assessed its impact through an autoethnographic method. The results revealed that, while the English students encountered challenges with the approach, the proposed teaching unit positively influenced their environmental awareness and proactivity. It also cultivated an engaging learning environment, thereby enhancing various aspects of their linguistic competence. Consequently, this paper serves as a model for the implementation of environmental approaches in English classrooms, an area that has seen limited exploration by researchers, and which both teachers and scholars have requested. In broader terms, given the nature of the participants' difficulties when working on the proposal, the findings reveal that there is a need to update teaching methods in English formal instruction and to provide further guidance on the didactic exploitation of films.

**Keywords:** English as a foreign language teaching; environmentalism; cinema; didactic proposal; secondary education.

### ES El ecologismo en el aula de inglés: Un análisis auto-etnográfico de una propuesta didáctica basada en cine

**ES Resumen.** La destrucción ambiental es un problema global, que se trata como contenido transversal en el currículo. Sin embargo, está poco presente en las aulas de inglés debido a la falta de conocimiento pedagógico de los profesores en este ámbito. Este artículo tiene como objetivo promover la incorporación de aspectos medioambientales en la enseñanza del inglés presentando y analizando una propuesta didáctica instructiva basada en la película *Avatar* (2009). Por lo tanto, el artículo explora los principios de la eco-educación y las posibles ventajas de la enseñanza basada en cine. Los autores implementaron la unidad didáctica en dos clases de secundaria y examinaron su impacto mediante un método auto-etnográfico. Los resultados mostraron que, aunque los estudiantes de inglés tuvieron dificultades para seguir el enfoque empleado, la propuesta tuvo un impacto positivo en su conciencia medioambiental y proactividad, y creó un entorno de aprendizaje estimulante, mejorando así varios aspectos de su competencia lingüística. El artículo constituye, por tanto, un modelo para la implementación de enfoques medioambientales en las aulas de inglés, algo que pocos investigadores han hecho hasta el momento y que tanto profesores como académicos han solicitado. En términos más generales, y dada la naturaleza de las dificultades que mostraron los participantes cuando trabajaron en la propuesta, los datos revelan que es necesario actualizar los métodos en la enseñanza formal del inglés y proporcionar más orientaciones para la explotación didáctica de películas.

**Palabras clave:** Enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera; ecologismo; cine; propuesta didáctica; educación secundaria.

## FR L'environnementalisme dans la classe d'anglais : Une analyse auto-ethnographique d'une proposition didactique basée sur le cinéma

**FR Résumé.** La dégradation de l'environnement est un problème mondial et un contenu interdisciplinaire dans le programme scolaire. Cependant, l'environnement n'est guère abordé en classe d'anglais du fait du manque de connaissances pédagogiques des enseignants en la matière. Cet article vise à promouvoir l'intégration d'aspects environnementaux dans l'enseignement de l'anglais en présentant et analysant une proposition didactique instructive basée sur le film *Avatar* (2009). Il explore donc les principes de l'éco-éducation et les avantages possibles de l'enseignement basé sur le cinéma. Les auteurs ont mis en place l'unité didactique dans deux classes du secondaire et ont examiné son impact selon une méthode auto-ethnographique. Les résultats ont révélé que, même si les étudiants d'anglais ont éprouvé des difficultés à suivre l'approche utilisée, la proposition a eu un impact positif sur leur conscience environnementale et leur proactivité, et a créé une atmosphère d'apprentissage stimulante, améliorant ainsi plusieurs aspects de leur compétence linguistique. L'article constitue donc un modèle pour la mise en œuvre des approches écologiques en classe d'anglais, ce que peu des chercheurs ont expérimenté jusqu'à présent et que des enseignants et des intellectuels ont réclamé. De façon plus générale, et compte tenu de la nature des difficultés rencontrées par les participants, les données montrent qu'il est nécessaire d'actualiser les méthodes de l'enseignement formel de l'anglais et de fournir des orientations supplémentaires pour l'exploitation didactique des films.

**Mots-clés:** Enseignement de l'anglais comme langue étrangère ; environnementalisme ; cinéma ; proposition didactique ; éducation secondaire.

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### Declaración de contribución de autoría

Estefanía Sánchez Auñón: conceptualización, curación de datos, análisis formal, adquisición de fondos, investigación, metodología, administración del proyecto, recursos, supervisión, validación, visualización, redacción (borrador inicial), y redacción de la posterior revisión y edición.

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### 1. Introduction

The teaching of English as a foreign language (TEFL) has traditionally centered on enhancing linguistic and intercultural competences (Albright & Kramer-Dahl, 2009). Nevertheless, the diverse range of topics encompassed within the English curriculum offers EFL educators the opportunity to go beyond language proficiency and also promote students' awareness of critical social matters such as environmental degradation (Hauschild et al., 2012; Hossain, 2018). Given its accelerating global impact, the present article addresses the issue of environmental damage within the context of English language instruction. Situated, then, at the intersection of ecology and education, this study deems it necessary to clarify certain key concepts. Firstly, *environmentalism* refers to ideals and practices that reflect a concern for the preservation of nature, representing a broader eco-friendly outlook on life (Pepper, 2019). Secondly, *environmental education* (EE) is defined as the process of imparting knowledge and motivation to students, equipping them with the means to safeguard the environment (Stapp, 1969). *Eco-education*, as one of the different pedagogical currents within EE (Sauvé, 2005), serves as a didactic framework specifically designed to bring environmentalism into the classroom.

Ecological matters have progressively assumed a cross-curricular role worldwide and have already been incorporated into the TEFL curriculum in Spain, the setting for this study. Nevertheless, these themes are often treated superficially outside the realm of science disciplines, with only a limited number of educators utilizing eco-education for such purpose (Flores, 2013; Reid et al., 2021). Educators have recognized the

pedagogical significance of environmentalism in various studies (Cincera et al., 2021; Gursoy & Saglam, 2011; Türkoglu, 2019), yet their beliefs do not align with their instructional practices. As Timothy and Obiekezie (2019) noted, EFL teachers frequently overlook environmental content either because it is not directly related to the subject of English, or due to their reluctance to address potentially controversial topics in their lessons.

In addition to demotivation, EFL instructors have identified substantial barriers to the effective integration of eco-education. They emphasize the scarcity of practical applications for this approach in TEFL and their lack of pedagogical knowledge, particularly when it comes to selecting effective resources (Gadotti, 2010; Muro & Pérez, 2021; Olsson et al., 2016). Notably, audio-visual materials such as films have proven to be highly valuable for instilling positive environmental attitudes in students (Alyaz et al., 2017; Harness & Drossman, 2011; Nolan, 2010). Throughout this article, the authors illustrate the implementation of eco-education as a methodological approach, using a film, within a specific teaching unit.

Abundant research has been conducted on the incorporation of environmental approaches into education. However, as concluded by Wu and Shen (2016), it has concentrated on the fields of science, engineering, and business. Certain scholars have analysed instructors' and students' attitudes towards the implementation of environmental initiatives in the EFL classroom. Nkwetisama (2011) and Gursoy and Saglam (2011) explored English teachers' opinions, revealing a lack of awareness about the potential of the discipline in raising students' environmental consciousness. Hossain (2018) examined university-level English learners' views concerning the combination of English instruction and green pedagogy, with largely positive responses.

There is also some didactic research on the application of eco-education programmes to TEFL. Nonetheless, the available findings in this area are both limited and inconclusive, primarily comprising theoretical explorations (Timothy & Obiekezie, 2019) or superficial investigations (Castillo & Rojas, 2014; Hauschild et al., 2012; Jaramillo & Medina, 2011; Setyowati & Widaiti, 2014). Timothy and Obiekezie (2019) engaged in a theoretical discussion supporting the integration of environmentalism into TEFL, and offer general recommendations for its implementation. For their part, other academics have presented didactic proposals to introduce environmental initiatives into EFL lessons, which, as Muro and Pérez (2021) stress, are essential as they allow under-trained teachers to self-learn the core elements of the approach. Still, in a general sense, these academics describe a short series of decontextualized activities based on environmental content in which only some of the language skills are targeted (Castillo & Rojas, 2014; Hauschild et al., 2012; Jaramillo & Medina, 2011; Setyowati & Widaiti, 2014). Furthermore, the majority of them fail to provide any empirical data, with Castillo and Rojas (2014) being a notable exception. They tested their EE intervention in a primary education EFL class, reporting that the participants had improved their linguistic competence at the same time as developing their ecological consciousness.

Similarly, as underlined by Alyaz et al. (2017), there is a paucity of research on the use of cinema as a tool for implementing eco-education. The limited existing scholarly production in this area predominantly consists of theoretical explorations (Brown & Lindvall, 2019) or descriptive accounts (Clover, 2012). The practical applications presented are primarily confined to film screenings and isolated cinema-based tasks related to ecological issues (Gold et al., 1996; Rosa & Bastiani, 2012). Only Pollock (2004) focuses on the exploitation of films for the inclusion of environmentalism, specifically, in the English subject, who presents a theoretical description of their own experience in the classroom. Against this background, scholars like Hauschild et al. (2012) have stressed the need for more comprehensive didactic proposals to introduce ecological approaches into TEFL, advocating the creation of complete environmentally themed teaching units.

In this context, the present study is driven by a two-fold objective. Firstly, it aims to exemplify how environmentalism may be applied comprehensively to TEFL through eco-education and the use of films. To achieve this, a teaching unit (TU) grounded on eco-education and cinema-based instruction is detailed. The authors propose a balanced teaching perspective in which linguistic and ecological objectives are accorded equal significance. And secondly, employing an autoethnographic method, the study seeks to determine the efficiency of the presented didactic proposal as perceived by the researcher-instructor. The analysis of the TU's implementation yields pedagogical insights that can benefit educators aiming to incorporate environmental content into their English classrooms and advance research in this underexplored area from a didactic prism.

## 2. Theoretical framework

### 2.1. An environmental approach to TEFL: eco-education

The conceptualization of environmental education has been a subject of substantial debate due to its diverse origins, resulting in a lack of consensus among researchers and practitioners regarding teaching strategies (Eilam & Trop, 2010). The absence of a standardized method has led to the development of 15 distinct pedagogical currents: naturalist, conservationist/resourcist, problem-solving, systemic, scientific, humanist/mesological, value-centered, holistic, bioregionalist, praxic, socially critical, feminist, ethnographic, eco-education, and sustainable development/sustainability (Sauvé, 2005). Field experts regard this varied set of practices as a valuable source of inspiration, and encourage teachers to examine it critically in light of the specific student population and educational context (Hart, 2010; Sauvé, 1996).

According to several investigations (De Souza & Pereira, 2011; Flores, 2013), teachers tend to adopt the naturalist and conservationist/resourcist currents. In these cases, the whole instructional experience revolves around nature, fostering the protection of the environment and the preservation of natural resources; and the human being is left aside because it is thought to be unconnected to it. As Flores (2013) maintains, a more integral approach to environmental education is preferred. That is why the didactic proposal present-

ed in this article is based on eco-education, a current that places the human-nature relationship at its core (Sauvé, 2005). The most pertinent features of eco-education are synthesized hereafter.

The term *eco-education* was defined in 1969, and its fundamental goals were set at the Tbilisi Conference of 1977. According to these, eco-educators should endeavour to (i) raise students' consciousness and concern about socioeconomic, political, and ecological interdependence; (ii) facilitate the acquisition of the required knowledge, values, and skills to protect nature; and (iii) foster the adoption of pro-environmental patterns of behavior both as individuals and as a society (UNESCO, 1977). Scholars remark that, to achieve such objectives, eco-education programmes have to reflect and interlink three major threads: education *about* the environment (technical theorizing), which involves conveying factual information so that learners can grasp environmental concepts and processes; education *in* the environment (practical theorizing), which seeks to engage students emotionally with nature through direct experiential learning; and education *for* the environment (critical theorizing), focused on developing a personal environmental ethic through values education that leads students to action (Tilbury, 1995). Since these threads address various dimensions of the learning process (knowledge and understanding, skills, and attitudes), eco-education should be awareness-raising, holistic, multi-method, learner-centred, and action-oriented. It should also target critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making abilities (Sauvé, 1996). In essence, this approach signifies a transition from traditional transmissive education to a transformative model (Gadotti, 2010).

The contents and the perspective from which those contents are tackled also need careful consideration. Eco-educators must instil a love for nature so that students can establish affective bonds with the environment and care about it. Hence, they should explore ecological principles that extend beyond the anthropocentric conception of nature as a resource provider (Kopnina, 2013); for instance, recognizing the intrinsic value of natural elements or acknowledging humanity's interconnectedness with the biosphere (also known as "ecological ubuntu"). Moreover, academics recommend sharing an optimistic and empowering message on ecological matters to trigger action (Tsevreni, 2011). As Eryaman et al. (2010) indicate, eco-educators have to emphasize the vital role of students in resolving the ecological crisis and show them the various individual and collective avenues through which they can proactively contribute to improving it. By doing so, learners may assume responsibility and realize it is not too late to save the Earth.

TEFL holds great potential for implementing eco-education for numerous reasons: English is a mandatory subject at all educational levels; it allows eco-educators to introduce environmentalism from various aspects of the course (vocabulary and grammar learning as well as the practice of writing, reading, listening, and speaking skills); and cultural boundaries become less prominent in the English classroom, facilitating the understanding of ecological concepts. Furthermore, EFL students practice interaction skills frequently, making them more confident to express their thoughts on environmental matters and to participate in social mobilisation (Setyowati & Widaiti, 2014; Timothy & Obiekezie, 2019; Wu & Shen, 2016). Several studies have confirmed the positive correlation between eco-education EFL programs and heightened environmental awareness among English learners (Castillo & Rojas, 2014; Hossain, 2018).

## 2.2. Cinema-based instruction

Cinema has been recognized as a highly effective didactic tool, particularly for foreign language teaching because it helps students hone their linguistic and intercultural competences and stimulates them to learn (Boussif & Sánchez-Auñón, 2021; Riswanto et al., 2022; Wardhany, 2022). Students find cinema motivating for two major reasons: films depict complex topics relevant to their daily life and encourage critical thinking (Benshoff & Griffin, 2021; Monsalve & Ruiz, 2021). The inclusion of social issues such as sexism or environmental damage and the development of critical thinking skills are contemplated in the two Spanish education laws that concern this article – the Organic Act 8/2013, of 9 December, for the Improvement of the Educational Quality, in force during the planning and course of the investigation; and the Organic Act 3/2020, of 29 December, which Modifies the Organic Act 2/2006, of 3 May, on Education, fully into effect in the 2023/2024 academic year.

These characteristics of cinema make it an ideal ally for the implementation of eco-education programmes in the EFL class. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) recommends the use of films to teach environmental vocabulary (Alyaz et al., 2017; Council of Europe, 2020), and eco-educators are encouraged to apply cinema-based tasks because audio-visual materials of this kind inspire students towards a more environmentally conscious understanding of the world (Clover, 2012; Pollock, 2004). As emphasized by Wu and Shen (2016), cinema often exhibits the ideological and cultural structures contributing to natural degradation and depicts ecological principles as part of our daily reality. Besides, it sparks imagination and creativity. Thus, through the use of films, environmentalism can be introduced into the EFL class in a more straightforward and appealing manner, addressing both students' cognition and emotion (Jaramillo & Medina, 2011; Topp et al., 2019). This helps learners to fully understand the core of the ecological crisis. Also, as they experience these issues more vividly than when reading about them in textbooks, they are more likely to become active participants in pro-environmental change (Bahk, 2010; Erdem, 2018).

Research has provided basic pedagogical recommendations for the exploitation of cinema in EFL contexts. To avoid the common mistakes made by English instructors when incorporating film into education, Yue (2019) suggests designing film-based teaching units with clear pedagogical goals in mind, adapted to learners' varying proficiency levels to engage them in the lessons. The planning of pre-viewing, while-viewing, and post-viewing tasks is highly recommended to ensure comprehensive coverage of all aspects of the English language competence (Li & Wang, 2015). Additionally, teachers should work on short selected



excerpts lasting 2 to 5 minutes rather than screening entire films to avoid distraction and direct the learners' attention towards the targeted contents (Jurkovic, 2016). In the opinion of EFL teachers, the toughest aspect of cinema-based instruction is film selection (Kabooha, 2016). Experts in the field have suggested the following criteria: alignment with didactic objectives, language appropriateness for students' proficiency, language input amount, plot complexity, relevance to learners' characteristics (age and sociocultural background), and ideological content (Anas & Zakaria, 2019; Asyidiq & Oktariani, 2020).

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Educational context and participants

The teaching unit presented in this article was designed for fourth-year students in Compulsory Secondary Education (CSE). It was implemented at a public high school in south central Spain, where English is a mandatory subject at all levels of education with 4 weekly sessions of 55 minutes each.

Environmentalism has been a cross-disciplinary topic in Spain since the 1990s, when it was established as such through the Organic Act on the General Organization of the Education System (Organic Act 1/1990, 1990), and it has continued to be integrated into subsequent education laws. The Organic Act 8/2013 recognizes ecology as a transversal content and includes it as one of the twelve objectives of CSE (objective k). The more recent Organic Act 3/2020 implies a strong environmental shift in education since it is deeply anchored in Agenda 2030 (Negrín & Marrero, 2021), a backdrop which gives special relevance to the proposal. In broad terms, it aims to foster a closer connection between students and their natural surroundings and to prepare them for present and forthcoming climate challenges. Sustainable development is one of the cornerstones of the law, environmental aspects remain cross-curricular, and additional legal requirements are introduced: the educational project of every centre must involve sustainability, and teachers must be provided with specific training on this area.

The participants in this study were 48 EFL learners from two groups of 30 and 18, respectively. They were between 15 and 16 years old and, according to their regular class teacher's assessment, had reached a B1 level as stated in the CEFR. The learners and their parents were informed on the intervention and asked for consent.

#### 3.2. Tools for data collection

A film-based eco-education teaching unit was designed and implemented in the two high school EFL classes during one month (See Annex 1 for details). The research methodology employed was analytic autoethnography, whereby the researcher-instructor interpreted their individual experience and practice to construct a theory (Denzin, 2006). Analytic autoethnography is particularly suitable when tackling issues related to social justice such as environmentalism because, as Starr (2010) remarks, the self-enlightenment teachers acquire in this process facilitates transformative learning. Participatory field observation was conducted, and the data were collected through a reflective journal. The researcher-instructor recorded her impressions on the TU's implementation during and after each session.

#### 3.3. Methods for data analysis

The reflective journal was subject to qualitative analysis using the constant comparative method, a technique commonly associated with autoethnographic research (Pace, 2012). All raw data were initially open-coded by both authors, using simple words to identify significant actions, and comparing all the codes that emerged. The codes were then studied again and grouped into broader categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). Intercoder reliability was established at 94%, and the disagreements were discussed by the coders until reaching common ground. The analysis process is illustrated in *Table 1*:

Table 1. Data coding and categorization

Example	Code	Category
"Many of the groups provided relevant advice to protect the elm trees as they <b>referred to the eco-friendly activities seen</b> throughout the TU"	(ENV)	Environmental learning
"The students are <b>very interested</b> in the activity 'audio-dubbing.' They are <b>laughing</b> and <b>having fun</b> while planning their scripts"	(MOT)	Increased motivation
"Most of the learners have <b>answered the listening comprehension questions correctly</b> "	(LING)	Linguistic gains
"The students have <b>just looked at the screen</b> and have <b>not done the activity</b> "	(CHALL)	Perceived challenges of the approach

Source: Own elaboration

## 4. Didactic proposal

### 4.1. Design basis

The design of the teaching unit was shaped by the theoretical foundations of eco-education and cinema-based instruction reviewed before. The film chosen was *Avatar*, directed by James Cameron and released in 2009. In addition to meeting the film selection criteria outlined above, it represents environmentalism in a visual and impactful way. As Cepek (2011) argues, *Avatar* arouses the learners' curiosity for ecological themes and nurtures environmental care by offering a unique view of nature in a world vastly different from our own. Salami tactics were applied, meaning the researchers selected the most pertinent excerpts from *Avatar* based on the set pedagogical objectives and then created pre-, while-, and post-viewing tasks to be completed in consecutive lessons (Sherman, 2003). The planning of the TU is provided in Annex 1, and its pedagogical features are detailed in section 4.2. below.

### 4.2. Description

#### 4.2.1. Teaching stages

The teaching unit, titled "Our Eywa," is composed of 11 lessons grouped into three primary stages: (1) concern for environmental degradation, (2) adoption of eco-friendly behavioral patterns, and (3) context-based action. In the first stage, comprising lessons 1-4, students become conscious of the pressing ecological issues we face today by comparing the film's setting (the environmentally-rich fictional planet Pandora) with the Earth. They also start to come nearer nature as they learn about humanity's interconnection with the biosphere. As a case in point, in lesson two, a film excerpt is screened where the protagonist, Jake, connects his tail to a horse-like creature in order to establish a mental bond with it and be able to ride it. After watching the fragment, students engage in a discussion to reflect on the concept of ecological ubuntu. Lesson four includes another noteworthy task - a self-analytical activity where students use "The Ecological Footprint Calculator" to assess the environmental impact of their daily actions. This activity aims to make them aware that their everyday routines may unwittingly contribute to the environmental crisis and that they can take meaningful steps to prevent its exacerbation, preparing them for the next stage.

The second stage, encompassing lessons 5-8, is pivotal as it enacts students' transition from awareness to actual change. In the first place, they learn about practical eco-friendly actions that necessitate profound personal and societal transformations. Afterwards, they are encouraged to adopt and promote such pro-environmental behavior as they empathize with the Na'vi's suffering for the destruction of their habitat and explore the value of nature. For example, in lesson five, they do an expert-learning activity where they read about renewable energies, recycling, and vegetarianism, and they have to create a poster to promote one of those actions. In lesson seven, students watch another film scene showing the devastation of Pandora for mineral extraction by the Colonel. This is followed by a debate where half of the learners support the Colonel's materialistic views, while the others fight for the planet's conservation. During the debate, students gain insight into the severe consequences of environmental harm for any species and recognize the need for a pro-environmental discourse.

In stages 1 and 2, environmentalism is mostly approached from the film's perspective, using the plot as a platform to address general aspects. In the third stage, which includes the final three sessions, *Avatar* takes a back seat as the focus shifts to the students' immediate context to foster further sensitization and action. In this phase, the concepts of ecological ubuntu and the value of nature are related, firstly, to various types of trees, and, next, to the elm tree, particularly cherished in the learners' city. Besides, students reinforce the environmental learning they have acquired in the previous sessions. The most clarifying example of this stage is the final task. In the first part, students conduct a self-assessment of their environmental behavior writing an opinion essay. The other part of the final task consists of an oral presentation where they have to select a street elm tree, evaluate its condition, and give advice on its protection, leading them to pay closer attention to their environmental surroundings and to take action accordingly.

#### 4.2.2. Teaching contents

Table 2 outlines all the linguistic and environmental components incorporated into "Our Eywa." The authors aligned the TU's specific linguistic elements with the English curriculum of the fourth year of CSE in the corresponding Autonomous Community (See Annex 2 for further information on the curriculum elements targeted). Regarding environmental aspects, some emerge from *Avatar*, and others are key ecological principles deemed essential for effective eco-education: the human beings' interconnectedness with nature (Pereira & Forster, 2015), the intrinsic value of natural elements (Kopnina, 2013), and place-based environmentalism (Freire, 2011).

Table 2. Specific contents

Linguistic aspects	Environmental aspects
Vocabulary related to the space, listening skills, adjectives to describe places, comparison, speaking skills, agreeing/disagreeing, expressing personal opinion, linking words, reading skills, relative clauses, vocabulary related to ecological issues, ability (past, present and future), vocabulary related to wildlife, adjectives to describe physical appearance, vocabulary related to eco-friendly actions, narrating, prefixes, arguing for/against, oral emphasis with auxiliary verbs, giving reasons, debating, vocabulary related to trees, making hypotheses, opinion essay writing conventions, writing skills.	Ecological issues, human beings' interconnection with nature, potential destruction of the Earth, individual and collective eco-friendly actions, promotion of pro-environmental attitudes, alternative conceptions of nature, intrinsic and extrinsic value of nature, mycorrhizal networks – trees' ecological ubuntu, consequences of environmental degradation, intrinsic and extrinsic value of trees, place-based environmentalism.

Source: Own elaboration

The linguistic and the environmental contents are taught in an integrated manner, continuously relating them to the film excerpts. For instance, in lesson 6, students practise their listening, reading, and speaking skills, and they learn about prefixes while exploring the characters' diverse conceptions of nature.

#### 4.2.3. Teaching approach

The teaching unit adopts communicative language teaching (CLT) as a general approach throughout, coupled with eco-education and cinema-based instruction. Students are encouraged to participate orally and share their views during all sessions, and they work on most contents through pair, group, and whole-class discussions. This dynamic interaction between teacher and students, and among students, tends to prompt deep reflection (Junko, 2019), facilitating the development of the learners' personal voice on environmental aspects. Project-based learning (PBL) is also implemented in lessons 10 and 11 for the final task. In line with the Organic Act 3/2020, this activity constitutes a learning situation as students have to apply the knowledge learnt to autonomously solve a real-world problem – the preservation of a local tree species. Moreover, implicit teaching prevails. The information is typically presented indirectly through *Avatar* excerpts and then practised in controlled, semi-controlled, and free-practice activities (Verdú & Coyle, 2002). Explicit explanations are provided only for concepts or linguistic structures that students may find challenging, such as ecological ubuntu or unfamiliar prefixes.

### 5. Results

The results obtained are presented according to the four categories established in the analysis: environmental learning, increased motivation, linguistic gains, and perceived challenges of the approach.

#### 5.1. Environmental learning

The researcher-instructor's journal showed that, at the outset of the intervention, the students possessed limited environmental knowledge. They initially struggled to comprehend the contents and digressed when reflecting upon ecological matters (Example 1). Then, as the TU progressed, their environmental competences significantly improved. The instructor perceived that the participants began to understand the environmental concepts addressed and exhibited a more proactive attitude. This progress was especially evident during the debate, where most students expressed profound environmental thoughts and provided compelling arguments in support of natural conservation. They were competitive and drew on ideas seen in class (Example 2). Similarly, the students enjoyed the search and protection of elm trees as part of the final task. As recorded by the instructor, they were enthusiastic to work on it, and their oral presentations often included eco-friendly actions they had learned about in previous lessons (reforestation, waste control, and leading by example).

##### Example 1

*"The students are not able to grasp simple environmental ideas ('what does Jake mean when he claims there is no green in our planet?'), and most of their answers are not even related to the topics being discussed."*

##### Example 2

*"Group B have been remarkably assertive in the debate. They have talked about species protection, ecological ubuntu, and the socio-cultural benefits of nature."*

The film *Avatar* played a crucial role in facilitating this acquisition of environmental knowledge, reinforcing the thematic thread of the TU and helping, thus, the students to digest complex information, as evidenced in lesson 3. After watching a scene in which Neytiri describes the visually perceptible bond that connects everything in Pandora, two students affirmed they had finally understood what that natural universal network means (Example 3).

### Example 3

*“The students have found the principle of ecological ubuntu complicated. I have had to clarify it multiple times. Two of them have confirmed understanding after watching the representative film excerpt (‘I get it! Ecological ubuntu is a bond connecting people, animals, and plants, like Jake and the horse’).”*

## 5.2. Increased motivation

Another notable outcome of “Our Eywa” was the students’ increased motivation, primarily due to the use of cinema. The participants exhibited excitement from the moment they learnt they would be working on *Avatar*, and they progressively engaged more actively in the lessons. As reflected in the journal, one of the aspects that captivated them the most was fragment viewing. Not knowing which film excerpt was going to be played next made them curious (Example 4), and being capable of understanding an authentic material boosted their self-confidence (Example 5).

### Example 4

*“I can see that the learners have finally entered Avatar’s universe. They are becoming interested in the topic and pay much more attention now. Since they do not know which excerpt they are going to watch, they are looking forward to discovering it. In fact, they look particularly excited when doing the film-based tasks of the TU, the ones that require working with the fragments directly; as is the case of audio-dubbing, an activity they have loved.”*

### Example 5

*“I have observed that they get motivated also because they comprehend the actors’ native English speech.”*

The participants’ motivation appeared to raise, then, as they got surprised by the approach implemented, which they considered to be a unique and stimulating way of learning English. The students’ comments to their regular class teacher, referring to the lessons as “cool,” and their disappointment when the TU concluded underscored their high appreciation of the didactic proposal. Additionally, the instructor highlighted in the journal that cinema-based teaching motivated the participants to learn grammar and vocabulary, making these contents more appealing as they were contextualized within the film’s plot (Example 6).

### Example 6

*“When I have told the students that we were going to study relative pronouns today, they have become discouraged, exclaiming that grammar was boring. However, I have taught relative pronouns implicitly, with the help of the film, and their attitude has improved. Before explaining them myself, I have asked the learners to describe elements from Avatar by using relative clauses. Almost all of them have tried to describe the photographs. I have seen that this activity has attracted their full attention, making them be more receptive and focus on the subsequent theoretical explanation.”*

## 5.3. Linguistic gains

The journal data indicated that the TU enhanced the participants’ English proficiency. The instructor monitored the acquisition of grammar and vocabulary contents while checking production activities, and she recorded that the students, not only displayed increased eagerness to learn, but also made an effort to utilize the structures and words studied in class, often using them correctly (Example 7).

### Example 7

*“When I marked the written report, I was pleasantly surprised at the fact that the learners had introduced an extensive range of the linguistic aspects covered in class: essay writing conventions, ability, linking words, vocabulary related to ecological problems and eco-friendly actions, comparison, and giving reasons.”*

The TU provided the learners with ample opportunities to develop their language skills through listening, reading, writing, and speaking tasks. The instructor especially noticed enhanced speaking ability among the students, as the pleasant classroom atmosphere created by *Avatar* encouraged greater participation (Example 8).

### Example 8

*“In the first lessons, the students hardly interacted with me and with each other. I have had to adapt some of the oral activities because they refused to speak. However, they have started to participate actively in the last sessions, even the shyest learners, and I am detecting substantial improvement. I think that, as they are enjoying film-based learning, they feel more relaxed and confident to talk.”*



#### 5.4. Perceived challenges of the approach

While the novel approach of the didactic proposal engaged the students, it presented some challenges. These learners struggled with communicative language teaching at first, finding certain oral and cooperative activities such as pair discussions or the role-play perplexing (Example 9).

##### Example 9

*“They did not know how to start discussing the questions together. I have had to monitor the activity, walking around the classroom to make sure that they did it correctly.”*

The salami tactics applied were also confusing to the students. The learners got impatient when they realized only short fragments from *Avatar* were going to be played. They kept on asking the researcher insistently to screen the entire film and watched the fragments passively without doing the activities until they got used to the method. This was because, as the participants declared, their class teacher stuck to the textbook, and the use she made of audio-visual materials was minimal (Example 10).

##### Example 10

*“The students have told me that they watch a whole episode of Stranger Things every Friday, and that they just enjoy from it.”*

Therefore, the learners had expected to watch *Avatar* from beginning to end without having to work on it. Their initial passivity toward the film-based tasks of the TU required an adjustment period. The instructor had to adapt several sessions, either setting in-class activities as homework or shortening them due to the participants' slow progress. Grammar teaching, the most challenging linguistic aspect to integrate with the film, presented another obstacle. As the instructor perceived, the explanations sometimes seemed disconnected from *Avatar*, and the amount of grammar activities may have been insufficient for the learners, who were accustomed to the traditional teaching methods employed by their regular class teacher. The participants demonstrated to have consolidated the grammatical structures taught, but this might hinder understanding in the case of students with a lower English proficiency or specific educational needs.

### 6. Discussion and pedagogical implications

The positive impact of the cinema-based teaching unit on the students' environmental knowledge is in line with previous research (Clover 2012; Pollock, 2004). However, this study expands the field by exploring the use of film to eco-educate in two contexts that are not typically targeted: EFL and CSE. The dearth of academic production on the intersections of EFL and EE, and cinema and EE, as highlighted by Alyaz et al. (2017) and Wu and Shen (2016), becomes even more evident when these domains are merged. This investigation is the first one to demonstrate that the combination of film, EE, EFL, and CSE can effectively help students develop their environmental and linguistic competences while creating an enjoyable classroom atmosphere.

The success of “Our Eywa” in enhancing the students' environmental competences might be attributed to the EE approach used in its design. Following academics' recommendations (Sauvé, 1996; Tilbury, 1995), our teaching unit was structured to activate education *about* the environment (the learners acquired theoretical knowledge on various environmental aspects); education *in* the environment (they interacted with nature by exploring the elm trees of their city); and education *for* the environment (they were shown how to act pro-environmentally through affective learning and value transmission). Ecological ubuntu and the value of nature are the central themes of multiple sessions, instilling feelings for nature in the learners (Kopnina, 2013). The TU also reflects Eryaman et al.'s (2010) and Tseveni's (2011) suggestions because students are encouraged to adopt and advocate eco-friendly behaviors through an eye-opening and positive discourse, a newfound commitment demonstrated in several activities. These pedagogical practices proved to be effective, as “Our Eywa” positively impacted the students' environmental knowledge and behavior, also confirming previous assertions on the strong potential of EFL courses to eco-educate (Hossain, 2018; Timothy & Obiekezie, 2019).

Given the scarcity of practical examples showing how to incorporate the fundamental tenets of eco-education into pedagogical interventions, especially in the form of a TU, “Our Eywa” can serve as a valuable methodological guide for EFL teachers interested in targeting environmental aspects in their lessons. Moreover, supporting Yue's (2019) directions, this study demonstrates that a film may be used as a framework to build a complete teaching unit rather than merely as an additional resource to implement isolated, unconnected activities (Rosa & Bastiani, 2012). As illustrated in “Our Eywa,” a film-based teaching unit allows teachers to address social justice themes, whether environmental damage or any other, while covering the corresponding curriculum contents.

The higher motivation the participants experienced while working on “Our Eywa” is consistent with prior research evidencing that the use of films tends to increase students' willingness to learn both linguistic (Boussif & Sánchez-Auñón, 2021; Wardhany, 2022) and EE-related contents (Cepek, 2011; & Topp et al., 2019). The linguistic learning reported in this study as induced by cinema-based instruction had also been emphasized in previous investigations. Nevertheless, available research has focused on exploring linguistic gains in isolation, mostly the improvement of speaking skills (Hoinbala, 2022) and vocabulary acquisition (Hestiana & Anita, 2022). Sustaining Li and Wang's (2015) recommendations, our intervention showed that, with careful planning and sequencing, cinema-based EFL instruction can address a wide spectrum of linguistic compe-

tences, including the four language skills, grammar, and vocabulary. Therefore, these findings may encourage EFL instructors to incorporate films as a primary teaching material.

The challenges these students encountered during the intervention cannot be compared with previous studies as this has not been a focus of interest to date. However, exploring the reasons behind these challenges is essential because they may offer valuable pedagogical implications for successfully implementing this approach with EFL learners similar to those participating in our study. The difficulties the students faced in following the communicative aspect of the TU and cinema-based learning appeared to stem from their familiarity with traditional lessons and passive use of audio-visual resources in class. This aligns with academics' insights that Spanish EFL instructors often rely on conventional materials (Ricoy & Álvarez-Pérez, 2016). Consequently, it is crucial to modify the commonly employed TEFL methodologies and to provide pedagogical guidance on the educational use of films (Jurkovic, 2016).

To address this, some recommendations are provided. Given the perceived novelty of the approach and the difficulties this caused, it is advisable to introduce cinema-based instruction more gradually, implementing short activities periodically before designing a complete film-based TU. The choice of the film also plays a significant role. In our study, all the learners had already watched *Avatar*, enabling a smooth comprehension of the film's plot, with the researcher-instructor providing a brief summary of previous events before playing each fragment. Using a film unfamiliar to students might further delay lessons as this would require longer narrations on the part of the teacher, and it is likely that the students concentrate too much on the story, losing focus. Hence, using well-known blockbusters or inquiring about learners' film preferences is highly recommended. Additionally, considering the instructor's concerns, a larger number of controlled and semi-controlled grammar tasks should be included within cinema-based teaching units to address all students' language learning habits and individual differences.

## 7. Conclusions

This didactic proposal illustrates a comprehensive introduction of environmentalism into TEFL through eco-education and cinema, aligning with the curriculum contents of the English subject for the fourth year of CSE. The study is of interest to both scholars and EFL practitioners as it explores two under-researched areas, namely eco-education beyond the domain of science and the use of film in EFL instruction. It also reveals the challenges faced by the students when dealing with this innovative approach, which include demotivation for communicative tasks and confusion regarding the exploitation of the film *Avatar*. Despite these challenges, "Our Eywa" successfully increased the learners' environmental knowledge and proactivity, enhanced their linguistic competence, and received a positive response from the students. These findings serve as a catalyst for raising awareness among EFL instructors, encouraging them to update their teaching strategies, to apply eco-education when dealing with environmental content, and to utilize films more frequently in their classrooms.

This article suggests several avenues for future research. The study could be replicated with larger samples of students to facilitate statistical analyses. Dividing participants into control and experimental groups and employing a pre- and post-test design would be revealing. This would allow data comparison, providing more rigorous evidence on the impact of the approach. Using additional data collection tools, such as rubrics, surveys, or interviews, in conjunction with observational methods, can also offer a more holistic understanding of students' and teachers' perceptions. Furthermore, scholars could explore the rate of effectiveness and acceptance of cinema-based eco-education within EFL across different proficiency levels, which might help define pedagogical implications more precisely.

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## 9. Annexes

### 9.1. Annex 1: Teaching unit “Our Eywa”

Table 3. Lesson planning

		Lesson 1
<b>Learning objective(s)</b>	Students will be able to talk about the space. Students will be able to describe and compare places.	
<b>Students' outcome(s)</b>	I can talk about the space. I can describe and compare places.	
<b>Linguistic objective(s)</b>	Describing Comparing Interacting	
<b>Key Competences</b>	Linguistic competence Cultural awareness and expression	
Structures and lexis: Vocabulary related to the space (meteorite, spacecraft, galaxy, solar system...) Adjectives to describe places Expressions to make comparisons		
<b>Materials:</b> Computer, projector, speakers, whiteboard, photocopies, notebook and pencil case.		
Outline of activities		
Dynamics	Brief description of activities	Time
T-Ss (Sp)	Firstly, the teacher explains the structure of the following lessons: what students are going to do, which contents they are going to study, and which the main objectives of this unit are.	2'
T-Ss (Sp)	The teacher introduces the film which is going to be used ( <i>Avatar</i> ). First, the different covers of the film are projected. Then, as <i>Avatar</i> is a very popular film, the teacher asks students if they have watched it before. If they have, students are asked to briefly explain what this film is about. If they haven't, the teacher gives details about the film and summarizes it so that learners get ready to work on it.	3'
Ss-T (Lt/Wr/Sp)	Fragment viewing (00:00:00 – 00:03:36) → students watch the beginning of the film, in which they can see how several people are travelling to a planet called “Pandora.” Before watching it, the teacher asks students to write all the vocabulary related to the space they can spot in this excerpt. After watching it and taking notes, students share the words they have collected while the teacher writes them on the whiteboard, creating a brainstorming together. The teacher adds new words if necessary.	10'
Ss (Wr)	Afterwards, students do a vocabulary activity to practice the new concepts related to the space they have learnt	7'
T-Ss (Sp)	Once the vocabulary activity is checked, the teacher asks students several questions about the fragment from <i>Avatar</i> they have just watched: “why do you think these people are leaving the Earth and going to Pandora?” “For what reason?” Students answer these questions orally, sharing their opinions with the teacher and with their classmates. The teacher moderates this discussion, trying to make students reach the conclusion that, maybe, the characters of the film are going to another planet because humans have destroyed the Earth. S/he tells learners that they are going to discover this later.	5'
Ss-Ss (Lt/Sp)	Fragment viewing (00:23:40 – 00:26:28) → another excerpt from the film is played in which Jake, the protagonist, and other people are arriving in Pandora. The teacher tells students that they have to pay full attention to the images they are going to see. After watching it, students are asked to describe Pandora orally in pairs (are there any animals, people, buildings...? Is it green? Can you notice any environmental problem such as pollution or deforestation? Does it look like a good place to live in? Why/why not? Do you think Pandora is a better place to live in than the Earth? Why/why not?). The teacher walks around the classroom to make sure that learners do this task. Then, some pairs chosen randomly share their descriptions.	18'

		Lesson 2
<b>Learning objective(s)</b>	Students will be able to write a script cooperatively. Students will be able to express agreement/ disagreement. Students will be able to comprehend the human being's interconnection with nature.	
<b>Students' outcome(s)</b>	I can write a text collaboratively. I can express agreement / disagreement. I comprehend the human being's interconnection with nature.	
<b>Linguistic objective(s)</b>	Agreeing/Disagreeing. Interacting.	
<b>Key Competences</b>	Linguistic competence Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship	
Structures and lexis: Expressions to agree/disagree Vocabulary to give opinions Linking words		
<b>Materials:</b> Computer, projector, speakers, whiteboard, photocopies, notebook and pencil case.		
Outline of activities		
Dynamics	Brief description of activities	Time
Ss-T (Sp)	At the beginning, the teacher asks students to summarize what they discovered about <i>Avatar</i> in the previous lesson. S/he tells them that, for the following lessons, they are going to watch more fragments from the film which show us Jake's life once he has arrived in Pandora.	2'
T-Ss (Lt/Sp)	Fragment viewing (02:08:13 – 02:10:00) → students are shown an excerpt from the film in which Jake is talking to "The Tree of Souls." Then, learners are given a photocopy with several sentences and questions from this fragment ("See the world we come from. There's no green there. They killed their mother" / What do you think the Tree of Souls represents? / "she [nature] protects the balance of life." Do you agree with Neytiri (the female Na'vi who teaches Jake their culture)? / Why does Jake connect his tail to the tree? What is he trying to achieve?). Students are asked to discuss these questions orally in pairs. Furthermore, the teacher projects useful expressions they can use when discussing these sentences and questions. S/ he explains how to agree/disagree in English and tells learners that they have to put this in practice when answering the third question. The teacher walks around the classroom to make sure that learners do the activity. Then, they share their answers and the teacher moderates the discussion until they reach two key conclusions: according to this film, (i) humans will have destroyed their planet by 2154, and that is why the characters travel to Pandora, and, (ii) for the Na'vi, everything is connected to and dependent on nature.	18'
Ss-T (Lt/Sp/Wr)	Fragment viewing (00:52:00 – 00:53:00) → students watch another excerpt from the film in which Neytiri is teaching Jake how to ride a horse-like animal. In it, they can see that Jake connects his tail to the animal's body. Audio dubbing: this video is played with the sound off and, therefore, students can see the images but they cannot hear anything. After watching it, they are asked to invent a short script for this scene in groups of 3. When they finish, some groups chosen randomly read their scripts. Afterwards, the teacher plays this fragment again with the sound on so that they can check their texts.	20'
T-Ss (Lt/Sp)	Then, the teacher asks students several questions about the excerpt from <i>Avatar</i> they have just watched: "As you have seen, Jake is using his tail again but, in this case, instead of connecting to a tree, he is connecting himself to an animal. With what purpose do you think he does it? What does this 'bond' Neytiri mentions symbolize?" Students share their views orally with the teacher and with their classmates. During this oral discussion, the teacher helps students to understand that, as depicted in the film, the whole world is a sort of network, and that, therefore, all species and parts of the environment are connected and interdependent.	3'
Ss (Rd)	At the end, the teacher hands in a reading comprehension activity and asks students to do it at home.. The reading portrays humanity's interconnection with nature (also known as ecological ubuntu) so that students can better comprehend this idea.	2'
		Lesson 3
<b>Learning objective(s)</b>	Students will be able to use relative clauses. Students will be able to talk about environmental degradation.	
<b>Students' outcome(s)</b>	I can use relative clauses. I can talk about environmental degradation.	
<b>Linguistic objective(s)</b>	Communicating. Explaining.	
<b>Key Competences</b>	Linguistic competence	
Structures and lexis: Relative clauses Vocabulary related to global warming (greenhouse gases, pollution, ozone layer...) Vocabulary related to environmental issues (deforestation, climate change, species extinction...)		
<b>Materials:</b> Computer, projector, speakers, whiteboard, notebook and pencil case.		
Outline of activities		
Dynamics	Brief description of activities	Time
T-Ss (Sp)	To begin with, the reading comprehension activity learners were asked to do at home is checked. After correcting the students' answers, the teacher makes sure that they have understood the concept of "ecological ubuntu" which is reflected in <i>Avatar</i> .	2'

T-Ss (Sp)	Then, the teacher projects several pictures and words which represent different elements from the film such as the main characters or the setting, and asks students to try to guess who these people are or what those pictures refer to. They will probably know most of them because, at this point, they will have already watched multiple fragments from the film. After they try, the teacher writes a description of each element on the whiteboard including relative clauses (“The Na’vi are the people who live in Pandora” / “The Tree of Souls is the tree which the Na’vi worship” / “2154 is the time when the film is set”). While describing each element, the teacher directs the learners’ attention to the relative pronouns included in the sentences.	8’
T-Ss (Sp/Wr)	The teacher provides students with a more explicit explanation of relative clauses, and they do an activity to practice this grammatical structure.	20’
Ss-T (Wr/Sp)	The teacher reminds students that, as Jake explains, by 2154, humanity will have probably destroyed the Earth.. S/he asks students how they think humanity has destroyed the planet. After listening to their answers, the teacher plays a video in order to show students different environmental issues which are threatening our world [ <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfGMYdalCIU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfGMYdalCIU</a> ]. Before playing it, the teacher asks students to write all the causes of such destruction they can spot in the video (deforestation, pollution, species extinction...). After watching it, students share their answers with the teacher and their classmates, and they create a brainstorming on environmental matters together on the whiteboard. The teacher adds new concepts if necessary.	8’
Ss (Wr)	Students do an activity to practice the new vocabulary related to environmental degradation they have learnt.	7’

**Lesson 4**

<b>Learning objective(s)</b>	Students will be able to talk about ability. Students will be able to talk about wildlife and endangered species. Students will be able to reflect on endangered animal species in Spain.
<b>Students’ outcome(s)</b>	I can talk about ability. I can talk about wildlife and endangered species. I can reflect on endangered animal species in Spain.
<b>Linguistic objective(s)</b>	Describing. Communicating. Interacting.
<b>Key Competences</b>	Linguistic competence Digital competence Cultural awareness and expression

Structures and lexis:  
Ability (past, present and future)  
Vocabulary related to endangered species and wildlife (conservation, reserves, threats, breeding, habitat...)

**Materials:** Computer, projector, speakers, whiteboard, photocopies, notebook and pencil case.

**Outline of activities**

<b>Dynamics</b>	<b>Brief description of activities</b>	<b>Time</b>
Ss (Lt)	Fragment viewing (01:16:42-01:17:38) → students watch an excerpt from <i>Avatar</i> in which Neytiri is showing Jake the bones of a great leonopteryx, an endangered animal species native to Pandora.	2’
Ss-Ss (Sp/Wr)	Then, the teacher asks students to guess what this animal looks like in pairs. Each pair of learners has to write several short sentences in which they explain the animal’s physical appearance and its abilities (“We think that it is a blue bird and that it can fly,” “I bet it is red, it has feathers, and it can swim...”). When they finish, several pairs chosen randomly read their task.	7’
Ss (Lt)	Fragment viewing (01:54:56 – 01:57:00) → the teacher plays another fragment from the film in which the great leonopteryx is shown while Jake is riding it so that learners can check if their hypotheses were right or wrong.	4’
T-Ss (Sp/Wr)	Next, the teacher explains ability (past, present and future), and learners do a grammar activity to practice this linguistic content.	20’
Ss-T (Sp/Wr)	The teacher reminds students that, as Neytiri says, the great leonopteryx is a critically endangered species, and that species extinction is a very serious problem which we are facing nowadays on the Earth too. Students have to give examples of endangered animal species in Spain. Then, the teacher projects a PowerPoint to cover vocabulary related to endangered species and wildlife. Following the explanation, students do an activity to practice this lexical content.	10’
T-Ss (Sp)	After checking the vocabulary activity, the teacher highlights the fact that species extinction is not the only environmental problem we are facing. S/he tells students that, as they saw in the video called “Man,” we, humanity, are destroying the environment in other different ways, even with our everyday actions. Thus, the teacher asks students to check “The Ecological Footprint Calculator” [ <a href="https://www.footprintcalculator.org">https://www.footprintcalculator.org</a> ] at home. They have to take notes on their results and on their most polluting actions. Through this tool, learners will become aware of the extent to which they contribute to environmental degradation.	2’

**Lesson 5**

<b>Learning objective(s)</b>	Students will be able to discuss and promote pro-environmental actions.
<b>Students’ outcome(s)</b>	I can discuss and promote pro-environmental actions.
<b>Linguistic objective(s)</b>	Explaining Discussing Promoting

<b>Key Competences</b>	Linguistic competence Social and civic competence Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship	
Structures and lexis: Vocabulary related to pro-environmental behavior Expressions to narrate and explain		
<b>Materials:</b> Computer, projector, speakers, whiteboard, photocopies, cardboards, notebook and pencil case.		
<b>Outline of activities</b>		
<b>Dynamics</b>	<b>Brief description of activities</b>	<b>Time</b>
Ss-T (Sp)	Firstly, the teacher asks multiple students to share the results they have obtained in "The Ecological Footprint Calculator." The aim is to make them realize that, in general, Spanish people have a rather polluting lifestyle.	3'
Ss-T (Sp/Wr)	Then, the teacher asks learners how they think they can help to solve the ecological crisis, that is to say, different actions they can do to solve this problem. The teacher writes the students' answers on the whiteboard and adds new words if necessary. The learners are asked to take notes.	5'
Ss-Ss (Rd/Wr)	Expert learning: students are divided into groups of 3, and the teacher hands in 3 texts about different pro-environmental actions (recycling, renewable energies, vegetarianism...). Each student in the group reads a different text and, then, they have to explain his or her classmates in the group what the text was about. When all members of the group have finished their explanations, students have to answer several questions about the three texts individually.	32'
Ss (Sp)	At the end of the lesson, the teacher tells learners that each group has to choose one pro-environmental action. They can choose an action both from the different texts they have read and also from the ones written on the whiteboard. Each group has to create a poster so as to promote the eco-friendly action they have chosen. The teacher projects examples of this kind of posters to give students some ideas. They have a few minutes to start thinking about their poster, but they have to finish it at home and bring it to class next day.	5'
		<b>Lesson 6</b>
<b>Learning objective(s)</b>	Students will be able to talk about recycling and renewable energies. Students will be able to use prefixes.	
<b>Students' outcome(s)</b>	I can talk about recycling and renewable energies. I can use prefixes.	
<b>Linguistic objective(s)</b>	Communicating Interacting	
<b>Key Competences</b>	Linguistic competence	
Structures and lexis: Vocabulary related to recycling (reuse, recycling bin, waste...) Vocabulary related to renewable energies (wind energy, turbine, solar panel...) Prefixes (anti-, ex-, im-...)		
<b>Materials:</b> Computer, projector, speakers, whiteboard, photocopies, notebook and pencil case.		
<b>Outline of activities</b>		
<b>Dynamics</b>	<b>Brief description of activities</b>	<b>Time</b>
T-Ss (Sp)	To begin with, the teacher asks each group of students which eco-friendly action they have chosen for their poster, and each of them sticks their poster on the wall of the classroom.	7'
T-Ss (Sp)	Then, the teacher summarizes the eco-friendly actions they worked on during the previous lesson.	5'
Ss (Wr)	Students do two activities to practice this lexical content (pro-environmental actions).	10'
Ss (Lt/Wr)	Fragment viewing (00:12:05 – 00:14:00) → students do a listening activity about another excerpt from <i>Avatar</i> , which is played twice. Then, the teacher checks the students' answers and makes sure that they have understood two key ideas: that these humans want to extract a very expensive mineral which can only be found in Pandora, and that there are two main sides (Doctor Grace supports immersion in the Na'vi culture and a pacific intervention. She argues that they need to understand that biologically rich world and to establish a bond between humanity and this species in order to get everything they want. However, Selfridge and Colonel Miles support violent colonization. They state that they will not get that mineral unless the Na'vi are under their control).	6'
T-Ss (Sp)	The teacher clarifies that, as they have probably noticed in that fragment from the film, Grace is an "anti-violence" character in <i>Avatar</i> , and asks students to guess the meaning of that expression, focusing on the prefix "anti-." Afterwards, the teacher projects a chart with several prefixes we can use in English and asks students to guess the meaning of each one and to give examples.	10'
Ss (Wr)	Finally, learners do a short vocabulary activity about prefixes to further practice this linguistic content.	7'
		<b>Lesson 7</b>
<b>Learning objective(s)</b>	Students will be able to participate in a debate on environmental issues. Students will be able to understand the reasons why we need to protect nature.	



<b>Students' outcome(s)</b>	I can take part in a debate on environmental issues. I understand the reasons why we need to protect nature.	
<b>Linguistic objective(s)</b>	Arguing for and against something. Justifying opinions. Giving reasons.	
<b>Key Competences</b>	Linguistic competence Social and civic competence	
Structures and lexis: Structures to argue for/against something Oral emphasis by means of auxiliary verbs ("do" and "did") Vocabulary to give reasons		
<b>Materials:</b> Computer, projector, speakers, whiteboard, photocopies, notebook and pencil case.		
<b>Outline of activities</b>		
<b>Dynamics</b>	<b>Brief description of activities</b>	<b>Time</b>
Ss-T (Sp)	Firstly, the teacher asks students to explain what they discovered about <i>Avatar</i> in the previous lesson (that the humans who have travelled to Pandora want to extract a mineral, and that there are two opposing sides: Doctor Grace and Parker and the Colonel).	2'
Ss-Ss (Lt/Sp)	Debate: the teacher tells students that the mineral these people want to get is buried under the Na'vi's cherished trees. After some time trying to extract it peacefully, the Colonel loses his patience and starts destroying Pandora's vegetation to reach the mineral. Another fragment from <i>Avatar</i> is played so that students can see this (01:24:43 - 01:28:00). Then, they do a debate. Learners are divided into two groups (group A and group B), and they are asked to discuss the following statement "Hometree must be destroyed so that the mineral can get extracted." Group A supports the Colonel's view whereas group B develops arguments against it and fights for the ecological protection of Pandora. The teacher gives each group several keywords so that they can justify their views and strengthen their arguments (Group A: money, power, colonization / Group B: environmental degradation, ecological ubuntu, species protection). Before starting the debate, the teacher projects several useful expressions they can use to argue for and against something, and learners are asked to use them during the debate. Besides, the teacher explains how they can emphasize everything they say with "do" and "did." Students have 10 minutes to prepare the debate and, then, they start.	25'
Ss-T (Sp/Lt)	Afterwards, a shortened version of the same fragment is played again (01:26:12 - 01:27:18), and, before watching it, the teacher asks students to pay attention to Jake's behavior. Once they have watched the video, students are asked to explain what Jake is doing (helping the Na'vi) and why they think he is doing that.	3'
Ss-T (Sp)	Then, the teacher asks students to think about different reasons why we must follow Jake's example and protect the environment. They have to write a list of reasons in pairs. Finally, multiple pairs share their list of reasons with the teacher and their classmates. While checking the learners' lists, the teacher writes all these reasons on the whiteboard and adds some more if necessary, practicing the pronunciation of these reasons and classifying them into different categories (economic/material reasons, health reasons, spiritual reasons, and social reasons).	15'
		<b>Lesson 8</b>
<b>Learning objective(s)</b>	Students will be able to relate the concept of "ecological ubuntu" to a specific example: trees. Students will be able to play different roles. Students will be able to reflect upon the consequences of environmental degradation.	
<b>Students' outcome(s)</b>	I can relate the concept of "ecological ubuntu" to a specific example: trees. I can play different roles. I can reflect upon the consequences of environmental degradation.	
<b>Linguistic objective(s)</b>	Communicating. Interacting.	
<b>Key Competences</b>	Linguistic competence	
Structures and lexis: Vocabulary related to trees Linking words		
<b>Materials:</b> Computer, projector, speakers, whiteboard, photocopies, notebook and pencil case.		
<b>Outline of activities</b>		
<b>Dynamics</b>	<b>Brief description of activities</b>	<b>Time</b>
T-Ss (Sp)	At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher projects two pictures from <i>Avatar</i> : one of "The Tree of Souls" and the other one of "Eywa" so as to underline the important role these trees have in the film. S/ he reminds students that they have already watched "The Tree of Souls" in several fragments from the film played in the classroom (when Jake is talking to it and when the Colonel starts destroying Pandora). The teacher explains that "The Tree of Souls" is directly connected to Eywa, another crucial tree for the Na'vi. Both are, in turn, connected to the rest of the planet, creating a huge network in which every being is linked. The students are told that, for the Na'vi, Eywa and the whole of nature are their God, and that is why they try to protect it at all cost.	2'
Ss-T (Sp)	Then, the teacher shows students a picture of a tree and a human being and asks them to react to the following statement: "Unlike human beings, trees are unconnected and independent individuals." Students give their opinions as a whole class activity. When they finish speaking, the teacher argues that the above statement is completely far from being true.	8'

<p>Ss (Lt/Wr)</p> <p>Ss-Ss (Sp/Lt)</p>	<p>Listening activity: A video is played (<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yWQgeyPIVRo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yWQgeyPIVRo</a>), and students are asked to do the following activity about it:</p> <p>First viewing</p> <p>1. How can you connect what you saw on this video with the concept of “ecological ubuntu”?</p> <p>Second and third viewings:</p> <p>2. What is the Wood Wide Web?</p> <p>3. What is the role of fungi in the Wood Wide Web?</p> <p>4. Write down three positive and one negative ways in which trees can use ubuntu.</p> <p>When they finish answering these questions, the listening activity is checked, and the teacher helps students to reach the following conclusion: Trees are a perfect example of what ecological ubuntu is.</p> <p>After that, the teacher focuses students’ attention on the fact that, in <i>Avatar</i>, the Na’vi, among all the elements of Nature, are especially interested in protecting trees.</p> <p>Fragment viewing (01:43:00 – 01:45:30) → students are shown a fragment from the film in which they can see how the Colonel continues with his plan and destroys Eywa. Role-play: student A plays the role of Neytiri and student B plays the role of the Colonel. They have to represent what each character is thinking and feeling at that moment. Besides, learners have to portray how the destruction of Eywa will affect each of them. When they finish preparing it, several pairs chosen randomly do their role play.</p>	<p>10’</p> <p>25’</p>
<b>Lesson 9</b>		
<b>Learning objective(s)</b>	Students will understand the importance of trees for the human being. Students will be able to do a reading task cooperatively.	
<b>Students’ outcome(s)</b>	I understand the importance of trees for the human being. I can do a reading task cooperatively.	
<b>Linguistic objective(s)</b>	Guessing. Interacting. Communicating. Giving reasons.	
<b>Key Competences</b>	Linguistic competence Cultural awareness and expression	
Structures and lexis: Vocabulary related to trees Structures to make hypotheses Linking words		
<b>Materials:</b> Computer, projector, speakers, whiteboard, photocopies, notebook and pencil case.		
<b>Outline of activities</b>		
<b>Dynamics</b>	<b>Brief description of activities</b>	<b>Time</b>
Ss-T (Sp/Lt)	First of all, the teacher reminds students the fragment they worked on in the previous lesson (the destruction of Eywa), and asks them to guess whether the Na’vi will be able to survive after this catastrophe or not. Learners share their views as a whole class activity, and, then, the teacher shows the end of the film so that they can see if they were right or wrong (01:45:21- 01:48:18). Once students have checked their hypotheses on the film’s end, the teacher tells them that, as they have seen, trees are so relevant for the Na’vi that they have to move to another part of Pandora after the destruction of Eywa.	10’
Ss (Wr)	Then, students do a reading activity about the importance of trees for the human being. This text contains points which refer to the value of trees according to the different categories about the reasons why we should protect nature students worked on in lesson 7 (economic/material reasons, health reasons...). Before reading the text, learners do an activity in which they have to match difficult vocabulary from the reading with pictures. While correcting the activity, the pronunciation of these lexical items is modelled.	8’
Ss-Ss (Rd/Wr/Sp)	Reading activity: firstly, students are asked to read the text individually and, afterwards, they read the text again in pairs. This time, learners have to match the different points from the text with the categories about the protection of nature. When they finish, students share their answers with the teacher and the activity is corrected.	20’
T-Ss (Sp)	Finally, the teacher reminds students that trees promote ubuntu for a reason they already know (as they saw in the video). However, s/he tells them that trees foster ubuntu in a different way too, and that this second form of ubuntu is related to human beings. This is mentioned in one of the points from the text they have just read. Thus, students are asked to identify this second form of ubuntu in pairs. After a couple of minutes, students share their answers with the teacher and the rest of their classmates. When they finish speaking, the teacher helps learners to understand the following ideas: trees promote ubuntu in two different manners (i) because they are interconnected among themselves (as seen in the video), and (ii) because they foster interconnection among human beings (celebrations, markets...) (as highlighted in the reading activity).	7’
<b>Lesson 10</b>		
<b>Learning objective(s)</b>	Students will be able to write an opinion essay. Students will understand the importance of trees in their own environment (Albacete).	
<b>Students’ outcome(s)</b>	I can write an opinion essay. I understand the importance of trees in my own environment (Albacete).	
<b>Linguistic objective(s)</b>	Expressing opinions	

<b>Key Competences</b>		Linguistic competence Social and civic competence Cultural awareness and expression Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
Structures and lexis: Vocabulary to give opinions Opinion essay writing conventions		
<b>Materials:</b> Computer, projector, speakers, whiteboard, photocopies, notebook and pencil case.		
<b>Outline of activities</b>		
<b>Dynamics</b>	<b>Brief description of activities</b>	<b>Time</b>
T-Ss (Sp)	During this lesson, the teacher explains the final task students have to do for this teaching unit. They have to do two main tasks: a written report and an oral report. The written report is an opinion essay. Therefore, firstly, students will be instructed on how to write one, and, afterwards, the oral activity will be clarified too.	2'
T-Ss (Sp)	The teacher explains the main conventions of opinion essay writing.	15'
T-Ss (Sp)	After this explanation, students are told what they have to do for the first part of the final task: 1) Written report (individually) (sent to the teacher via email): they have to write an opinion essay in which they respond to the following questions: "Do you consider yourself an eco-friendly person? Why/why not?" "What else could you do to help solve the environmental crisis we are facing at present?"	3'
T-Ss (Sp)	Next, the teacher explains the second part of this final task. Students have to do an oral presentation on elm trees in Albacete. Before describing the instructions of the activity, the teacher asks them why they think elm trees are being considered as the Eywa of Albacete, in other words, why they think elm trees are so important in this city. Students make their hypotheses, and, then, the teacher explains it.	10'
T-Ss (Sp)	Once students have understood why elm trees are the Eywa of Albacete, the oral report is explained: 2) Oral report (in groups): students have to prepare an oral presentation in groups of 3. In this presentation, they have to imagine that they are Na'vis and that the Eywa they have to protect is elm trees in the city of Albacete. They have to choose a specific elm tree in the city. After choosing their Eywa elm tree, students have to develop the following aspects: - the current condition of the elm tree - main dangers it is facing - if any action (political, from citizens, from pro-environmental associations...) is being taken to protect it - provide advice to protect it  They can look for this information on the Internet. Besides, the teacher will give them some useful links and materials as a guide. Learners may approach this presentation either as a formal/technical task or as a creative one. They can present factual information in an explicit way or they can explain everything about their Eywa in the form of a narrative story.  **Directions: -The presentation must last 3-4 minutes -All members of the group must speak -They have to include the contents they have learnt during this unit	5'
Ss-Ss (Sp/Wr)	After explaining both activities of the final task, students are given some time to start preparing them in class.	10'
		<b>Lesson 11</b>
<b>Learning objective(s)</b>	Students will be able to do a pro-environmental presentation. Students will be able to assess each other.	
<b>Students' outcome(s)</b>	I can do a pro-environmental presentation. I can assess my classmates.	
<b>Linguistic objective(s)</b>	Narrating Describing Persuading	
<b>Key Competences</b>	Linguistic competence Digital competence Social and civic competence Cultural awareness and expression Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship	
Structures and lexis: All the contents students have learnt during this teaching unit.		
<b>Materials:</b> Computer, projector, speakers, whiteboard, photocopies, notebook and pencil case.		
<b>Outline of activities</b>		
<b>Dynamics</b>	<b>Brief description of activities</b>	<b>Time</b>
Ss (Lt/Wr/Sp)	Students do their oral presentations. Furthermore, the teacher hands in an assessment worksheet to each group of learners. They have to assess their classmates' task, evaluating the following aspects numerically: linguistic competence, originality, solution to the problem, and persuasion skills (the extent to which they think the presentation has a positive impact on the public's environmental consciousness). When learners have finished assessing the task, the teacher proclaims the Oscar-winning presentation.	45'

## 9.2. Annex 2: Curriculum elements

Tables 4, 5, and 6 show the elements in the Official EFL curriculum which the TU addresses<sup>1</sup>:

Table 4. Contents

Contents (for the listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills as specified in the Official EFL Curriculum)
<p>Comprehension strategies: distinguishing comprehension types (general meaning, essential information, key points, relevant details, implications).</p> <p>Production strategies: conceptualizing the message clearly, distinguishing its main idea/s and basic structure; mobilizing and coordinating general and communicative skills with the aim of performing the corresponding task effectively (checking what you know about the topic, what it is to be said...); and expressing the message clearly and coherently, structuring it and adjusting to the standards of each type of text.</p> <p>Sociocultural and sociolinguistic aspects: social conventions, customary courtesies, and registers; interest in knowing customs, values, beliefs, and attitudes; and non-verbal language.</p> <p>Communicative functions: relationship initiation and maintenance; description of physical and abstract qualities of people, objects, places, and activities; narration of past one-off and habitual events, description of present states and situations, and expression of future events; request and provision of information, instructions, opinions and viewpoints, advice, warnings and notices; and communication establishment and maintenance and discourse organization.</p> <p>Syntactic and discursive structures: affirmation, negation, and interrogation.</p> <p>Expression of logical relationships: comparison and explanation.</p> <p>Expression of modality: ability.</p> <p>Expression of entity: relative pronouns.</p> <p>Common lexis: the environment, climate and natural surroundings.</p> <p>Sound, accent, rhythm, and intonation patterns.</p>

Source: Own elaboration based on Decree 40/2015

Table 5. Assessment Criteria

Skill	Assessment Criteria
Listening and reading	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Knowing and applying the suitable structures for the comprehension of the general meaning, the essential information, the key ideas, and the relevant details of the text.</li> <li>2) Identifying the essential information, the key points, and the most relevant details of short or medium length texts which are clearly structured in formal, informal, or neutral register. Oral texts will be articulated at average speed, acoustic conditions will be good, and they can be listened to more than once.</li> <li>3) Knowing and applying to the text comprehension the sociocultural and sociolinguistic aspects which are related to daily life, living standards, interpersonal relationships, and social norms, as well as general cultural aspects which help to comprehend the information and ideas of the text and non-verbal language.</li> </ol>
Speaking and writing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Knowing, selecting, and applying the most suitable strategies to produce short or medium length texts with a simple and clear structure.</li> <li>2) Producing short or medium length texts in a formal, informal, or neutral register; exchanging information, ideas, and opinions; justifying reasons for any actions and plans; and formulating hypotheses.</li> <li>4) Adjusting text production to the required functions, addressee, and communication channel, organizing the information clearly, expanding it by means of examples or summarizing it.</li> <li>5) Employing a broad range of syntactic structures and properly using basic cohesion and coherence resources to organize the speech.</li> <li>7) Interacting in a simple manner in brief exchanges on common daily situations, listening actively and respectfully, and adjusting the intervention to that of the interlocutor.</li> </ol>

Source: Own elaboration based on Decree 40/2015

Table 6. Assessable Learning Standards

Skill	Assessable Learning Standards
Listening	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7) The student distinguishes the main ideas and relevant information in presentations or talks on popular or interesting subjects when there is visual or written support (academic or scientific topics...).</li> <li>8) The student identifies the main idea and meaningful aspects of TV news, advertising spots, TV shows, and films.</li> </ol>
Reading	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6) The student recognizes significant ideas in simple informative articles.</li> <li>7) The student identifies the main conclusions of clearly argumentative texts.</li> </ol>
Speaking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The student participates in classroom activities actively and spontaneously, using the foreign language as a tool for communication (asking for permission, expressing opinions, answering questions...).</li> <li>2) The student does previously rehearsed presentations with visual support, on interesting educational or professional topics, and answers to simple questions which are articulated clearly and at average speed.</li> <li>5) The student participates in informal conversations in which s/he formulates hypotheses, proposes suggestions, asks for and provides instructions, expresses and justifies emotions, and describes aspects related to music, cinema, literature, topical subjects, etc.</li> </ol>
Writing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5) The student writes texts in conventional format in which s/he gives essential information; briefly describes situations, people, objects, and places; narrates events; and explains the reasons for certain actions.</li> </ol>

Source: Own elaboration based on Decree 40/2015

<sup>1</sup> As Assessment Criteria and Assessable Learning Standards are quite long, in Table 5 and Table 6, we provide a summary of each one. The full description of these elements can be found on the following pages of the Official Curriculum: pp. 350-356 (Decree 40/2015).