

A Neurolinguistic and Multimodal Approach: Integrating SDGs into English Language Learning through Documentary Films

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Abstract

Documentaries are a powerful medium to raise awareness about pressing environmental issues and to help shape learners' perceptions of planetary sustainability. While earlier research has explored the use of media and documentary formats at the tertiary level of education, work which situates these as curricular resources within an English language learning context is rather scant. The present qualitative study explores undergraduate students' perceptions of learning with documentaries as a means of integrating Sustainable Development Goals into the English curriculum while simultaneously supporting language acquisition.

This research was undertaken as a classroom research project with 45 first-year undergraduates from I & II Semester drawn from different disciplines in the Institute of Aeronautical Engineering (Autonomous), Dundigal, Hyderabad. Using visuals, narration, sound, and emotional cues, the documentary "Home" is incorporated into English lab sessions as a multimodal instructional text that enables students to engage with real-world language input. The research draws on multimodal learning theory and neurolinguistic theories to investigate how rich sensory input impacts comprehension, engagement, and awareness. Neurolinguistics is a conceptual framework for comprehending observable learning processes like attention, memory, and emotional engagement rather than a neuroscientific method of measurement.

Three main themes emerged from a thematic analysis of learner reflections and responses: (i) documentaries greatly increase learners' awareness of environmental issues; (ii) they facilitate meaningful connections with current global and environmental issues; and (iii) they improve language learning in general. Participants reported increased motivation to use English for discussion and introspection, as well as improved attentiveness and deeper comprehension. It appears that using documentaries within an English curriculum can support language development through authentic, emotionally engaging input, simultaneously promoting pro-environmental attitudes consistent with the SDGs of climate action and sustainable living. This underscores how film-based multimodal resources may play a more pronounced pedagogical role in shaping linguistically competent and environmentally awakened individuals who will face and manage a planetary future.

Keywords: Documentary-based pedagogy, English language learning, English curriculum, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Multimodal learning, Neurolinguistic perspective, Planetary sustainability.

Introduction

The current natural environment faces its most severe stress level because of industrialisation, which operates without sustainability and human-caused climate change. The world experiences multiple environmental changes, which include global warming and ozone layer depletion, air pollution and greenhouse gas build-up and sea level rise, and these changes create hazardous effects on both human life and ecological systems (Arslan et al., 2012; Buchanan, Pressick-Kilborn, & Maher, 2019; Ekborg & Areskoug, 2012; Wigley, 2018). The world now faces environmental problems, including plastic pollution and habitat destruction, and these issues create severe risks that endanger both biodiversity and ecosystem stability (Van Seville et al., 2015). The increasing environmental crises require shared responsibility between all individuals and groups to protect, restore and maintain natural ecosystems.

Environmental challenges need urgent solutions, yet educational systems treat environmental issues through superficial methods or disjointed approaches. Environmental education is integrated into the science curricula of most educational systems, but these programs treat it as an extra resource that students should study independently, particularly during the final weeks of academic terms when teachers focus on finishing required course material (Daniel, 2011; Teng, 2012). Students tend to think that they already know environmental concepts which they need to master, yet they lack the essential understanding and emotional connection with the topic. Teachers too may presume sufficient learner awareness, resulting in limited pedagogical investment in these topics.

People need direct experience with climate impacts because they face difficulty understanding how serious environmental damage affects the world. Students encounter environmental crises through their reading materials, digital content and visual media instead of actual experiences. The distance from real-life experience causes students to lose their ability to comprehend how ecological changes impact international communities, according to Teng 2012.

Insufficient environmental knowledge in students will decrease their ability to recognise environmental issues, which will decrease their environmental stewardship capacity. Hansman 2009 argues that people need to develop awareness and practical knowledge before they can demonstrate responsible environmental conduct. Environmental knowledge serves as the essential base which scholars use to explain how people change their behaviour (Bellino Adams 2017; Hungerford Volk 1990; Teng 2012). Educational methods need to teach young people about sustainability because they will create the future ecological environment through their learning and environmental behaviour. Implementing effective teaching methods becomes essential for developing environmental awareness in students while maintaining their active participation (Bellino Adams 2017; Cunningham 2010).

In modern educational settings, educational institutions utilise media-based teaching methods, including documentaries, as their primary method of environmental storytelling and awareness development (Ashraf, Shafiq & Batool, 2017; Liu, 2018). Educational media, such as movies and TV shows, blogs, articles, and documentaries, serve as powerful teaching tools that foster student comprehension of ideas and open up discussion topics in the classroom. According to cognitive psychology research, learners who receive information through both verbal and visual channels are better able to comprehend complex abstract ideas because visual symbols enhance their memory and conceptual understanding (Willingham, 2009; AyukAko, 2017).

Documentaries use narration and imagery together with emotional storytelling to create educational content which helps students develop their environmental awareness (Bahk, 2010; Liu, 2018).

Literature Review

Researchers from different academic fields have studied how educational institutions use documentaries to teach students who study different languages (Paran & Duncan, 2019), psychology (Simpson, 2008), and environmental education (Guler & Afacan, 2012; Liu, 2018). Documentaries combined with reflective activities and structured teaching methods help students learn social and emotional skills that exceed those they acquire through traditional textbook and lecture methods. The system enables students to travel to remote parts of the world while studying global environmental conditions and developing emotional ties with communities that contend with environmental difficulties (Guler & Afacan, 2012; Aziz, Manab & Othman, 2016; Liu, 2018).

The research shows that alternative documentary styles which use visual storytelling methods instead of traditional narration methods successfully boost viewer emotional connection and help them grasp environmental content better. Barbas (2009) found that non-traditional documentary styles were more successful in developing environmental awareness and creating emotional ties to environmental matters. Narrative films successfully motivate students, according to Bahk (2010), because they create emotional suspense and use relatable life situations to show environmental problems, which lead to developing empathic reactions in viewers. Reid (2012) demonstrated that documentaries help students learn difficult scientific concepts, but students do not necessarily change their attitudes after they gain new knowledge. The value of documentaries lies in their ability to create awareness and promote viewer participation.

Recent empirical studies demonstrate that documentaries serve as effective educational tools which successfully raise environmental awareness among viewers. Nolan (2010) discovered that when participants watched documentaries, their understanding of global warming increased and their greenhouse gas emission reduction plans developed. Minocher (2015) found that when students watched environmental documentaries, used social media and participated in group discussions, their civic and environmental activities increased.

Higher education institutions use documentaries as teaching materials, which help students develop environmental literacy skills and sustainability knowledge (Liu, 2018; Bahrin et al., 2018). Documentaries demonstrate their teaching value by transforming students' environmental sustainability knowledge, attitudes, and environmental behaviour patterns.

Research Gap and Purpose of The Study

People are becoming more interested in using documentaries to teach. There are still many questions about how documentaries actually help people learn, especially when it comes to learning the English language. Most of the research that has been done looks at how documentaries can be used to teach about the environment or how to use media to learn. Fewer studies have looked at using documentaries as a tool to help people learn the English language. Documentaries can support learning outcomes in English language learning environments, and we need to learn more about how documentaries support

these outcomes, specifically in the case of English language learning.

We do not know much about how using documentaries in the classroom can help students learn a language and also understand how to be sustainable. This is particularly true for students who are not studying a language. Are learning a trade or profession. We need to understand what students think about using documentaries in their classes. This will help us figure out if it is a way to teach and if students are actually learning from it. Documentary-based instruction is important. We need to know more about how it affects students, especially when it comes to language acquisition and sustainability awareness.

This study is trying to fill a gap. It looks at what undergraduate learners think about documentaries. The documentaries are used to teach people about issues and sustainability. This is done as part of a language-learning program. The study wants to answer this question:

How do undergraduate students perceive documentaries as a pedagogical tool for learning environmental education and sustainability within an English language curriculum?

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on a theory that combines a few ideas. It uses the idea that people learn in different ways, not just by listening or reading, but also looks at how our brains process language. How our feelings affect what we learn. It incorporates the fact that humans can learn kinaesthetically (by doing), visually (seeing) and verbally (reading/hearing) rather than just verbally. It also focuses on how our brains process language. It is trying to figure out how it works in a class where people are learning English.

The idea of multimodal learning theory is that people learn better when they get information in lots of ways. So they see, hear and read information rather than just reading about a subject. One way of doing this is through Documentary films. They consist of moving pictures, people speaking, music, and words on a screen. This allows people to think more about what they are learning and can help them retain the information. At the ELCS laboratory, they were shown a documentary titled *Home*, which taught individuals about the environment. It was a way to learn because it used lots of different senses at the same time, like sight and sound, to help people understand what was being said. This made it easier for people to comprehend and really get the ideas about issues.

When we learn a language, it is really connected to how we pay attention, how we feel about it and how well we remember things. If we hear or see things that are interesting and make sense, it helps our brain remember them better and learn more deeply. This study does not use tools to look at what is happening in our brain, but it uses ideas from language and brain science to understand what we can see people doing when they learn, like being more attentive, feeling more connected to what they are learning, thinking carefully about what they have learned and wanting to speak English more. Language acquisition is closely associated with attention, emotional engagement, and memory formation, especially when we are learning a language like English. The way *Home* makes you feel is really important. It seems that when you are emotionally involved in something, you can think clearly and learn new languages better. *Home* can do this

because it affects people. This emotional effect helps people learn and understand things more easily, especially when it comes to language.

Affective learning theory is important because it shows how our feelings and values play a role in learning. When we watch documentaries, they can make us feel concerned, empathetic and responsible. This can make us think about what we can do to help and actually do something. In this study, affective engagement helped people learn about the environment and use language more actively when discussing topics, reflecting on what they learned, and working together on tasks. The affective learning theory and affective engagement are key to making documentaries a useful tool for learning.

Together, these theoretical perspectives justify the pedagogical use of documentary films as multimodal, emotionally engaging, and cognitively rich resources capable of supporting language development while fostering sustainability awareness.

Methodology

General Background

This study examines how teaching English can help people learn about the environment and become more sustainable. We conducted this study in a classroom with students taking the English **Language and Communication Skills Laboratory** course at the **Institute of Aeronautical Engineering in Dundigal, Hyderabad**. The English Language and Communication Skills Laboratory course is part of the program at the Institute of Aeronautical Engineering, which is affiliated with JNTUH. We wanted to see if giving students assignments that made them think about what they were learning and how to use it in life would help them understand more about the environment and want to live in a more sustainable way. The English language instruction included practice-oriented assignments to help the English language learners become more aware of the environment and learn about sustainability.

The ELCS laboratory is different from environmental classes that teach students about being sustainable. This laboratory mainly helps undergraduate engineering students learn how to communicate. The laboratory used a documentary about the environment to help students learn a language and also learn about the environment. They wanted to see what happens when students watch documentaries and then talk about what they learned. They were trying to figure out if this way of learning would change the way students think about the environment and if they would care more about sustainability issues.

Do learners develop a better understanding of sustainability concepts after watching documentaries and participating in related discussions?

The documentary Home was incorporated into lab activities as “authentic material” to allow learners to process spoken language through audio-narration, imagery, and situational context. Reflection activities, collaborative discussions, and communication tasks were employed to prompt learners to express their understanding, opinions, and reactions to the documentary content in English. Thus, the research attempted to explore the effects of documentary-based learning on undergraduate students’ perceptions of ecological sustainability along with aiding language acquisition.

Why use Home for SDG-linked ELCS classroom activity?

Home (Arthus-Bertrand, 2009) documentary was chosen as the primary learning material of this research because it aligns closely with the SDGs, engages ELCS, is rich in multimodal content, and is appropriate for undergraduate students. The film presents an integrated view of planetary sustainability by addressing interrelated global concerns such as climate change, biodiversity loss, energy consumption, industrial expansion, resource depletion, and economic disparity—issues directly connected to SDGs including *Climate Action (SDG 13)*, *Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12)*, *Life on Land (SDG 15)*, and *Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11)* (United Nations, 2015). The documentary establishes sustainability as a global obligation, providing language students with access to SDG themes by demonstrating environmental destruction linked to human development activities.

The ‘Home’ serves as an English language input resource that helps ELCS students achieve their learning goals by providing authentic storytelling, real vocabulary usage, and international scientific, social, and environmental sustainability content. Authentic audio-visual materials improve listening skills and vocabulary development, as well as communication skills, because they present language in important real-life situations (Gilmore, 2007; King, 2002). The ELCS laboratory space allowed students to use the documentary for group work and speaking demonstrations while they discussed important social issues, which helped them develop their communication skills.

The documentary achieves teaching success through its multimodal design, which combines narration with high-definition aerial footage, music, and emotionally powerful storytelling. Multimodal learning theory posits that learners process information more effectively when verbal and visual channels are activated simultaneously, leading to improved retention and deeper understanding (Mayer, 2009). Home provides multiple sensory experiences that enable learners to develop both cognitive and emotional skills, according to neurolinguistic and affective learning theories, which state that this process helps students focus better, create memories, and develop motivation during their language learning.

The documentary suits engineering students because it shows how environmental challenges connect with technological advancement, industrial operations, energy usage and urban growth and infrastructure development, which all serve as fundamental elements of engineering study. Engineering education increasingly emphasises sustainability-oriented thinking and socially responsible innovation (Mulder, Segalàs, & Ferrer-Balas, 2012).

Real environmental influences will foster a sense of concern among students who watch documentaries with ecological themes. The documentary ‘Home’ is used as a primary material and a balancing link between the instruction of the language and the instruction of sustainability, as it offers both communication-based learning opportunities and a deep academic value.

Participants

This research involved **45 first-year Undergraduate Engineering students** pooled from both **I and II semester cohorts** at the Institute of Aeronautical Engineering (Autonomous), Dundigal, Hyderabad. The experiment was carried out over approximately eight weeks as a part of regular English Language Communication Skills laboratory sessions. The participants for this research were taken from heterogeneous and cross-sectional engineering disciplines, including Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical and Electronics Engineering

(EEE), Computer Science and Engineering (CSE), Electronics and Communication Engineering (ECE), and Aerospace Engineering.

The participants were in the age bracket of 17 to 19, were entering university, and came from diverse socio-cultural academic backgrounds.

As first-year engineering students, most of them were moving from schools that taught in their regional language to colleges that taught in English; the medium of instruction changed. This made it really important for the student community to be good at communicating in English.

The English language lab class is designed to help learners improve their listening, speaking, communication, and presentation skills. The students learnt by doing things and taking part in activities. They were made to work in groups, talk to each other and think about what they had learned. All these things are a part of the class, which helped them use English in real-life situations. In this specific session, they were asked to watch documentaries to start discussions, think about what they had learned, and practice communicative skills. This helped them learn about issues, like the environment and how to protect it, while also getting better at communicating in English.

Procedures and Data Collection

The ELCS – English Language Skills Laboratory had an exercise where the students were asked to review a movie of their choice. The documentary ‘Home’ was given as the primary material for the task, and they were to watch it. They were asked to explore and observe the different dimensions highlighted in the documentary, and while they were getting involved in the conversations, it was observed that their speaking patterns improved along with the quality of the content.

The award-winning documentary, ‘Home’, was directed by Yann Arthus-Bertrand and is 93 minutes long. It uses camera work to show how people are affecting the planet. The movie talks about issues like climate change, industry growth and how we use energy. It shows that people need to work to stop hurting the planet and to make the natural world healthy again.

The documentary was a choice for the students because it was interesting and easy to understand. The students already knew some science from before, so the movie helped them connect what they knew to life problems. As Liu said in 2018, we need to solve problems by working together and using what we know about science. The documentary showed environmental issues in a way that was easy to understand. This helped the students care more about the issues.

The ELCS Laboratory course used the documentary and some activities to make a learning space. The students watched the movie on their own. Then they had group discussions. They talked about the issues in the movie. Shared their thoughts with each other. The teacher helped the students. Did not tell them what to think. The students worked in groups and studied the movie together. They looked at parts of the movie and talked about what they saw. They discussed issues like cities growing, industry and how we use natural resources. The students then shared what they learned with the class. This helped them develop their thinking skills and get better at talking in front of a group.

At the end of the project, the students wrote essays about what they learned. They uploaded these essays in the worksheets. They were part of their grade. The instructor gave the students

some questions to answer to help them think about what they learned, how they felt about the documentary and how the film impacted them in terms of conservation of the planet.

Table 1. Student Reflection Guide

No.	Reflection Question
1	To what extent did your prior knowledge of environmental issues affect your understanding before participating in this activity?
2	Do you think that the problems discussed in the documentary are important and necessary? Please explain.
3	Do you think that the documentary presents factual truths? Explain your opinion.
4	What feelings did you experience while watching the documentary?
5	Did the documentary enhance your understanding of environmental issues? Please explain why or why not.
6	To what extent did the documentary engage and interest you? Please explain.
7	Do you think that documentaries help raise awareness about environmental issues?
8	What other approaches would you like to take to learn about environmental issues?

Data Analysis

The researchers used the constant comparative method from qualitative data analysis to study student reflections (Corbin, Strauss, & Strauss, 2015). The analytical method of this study uses repeated coding and categorisation to create themes for understanding the qualitative data patterns. The researchers used systematic comparison of responses to identify recurring ideas, which they organised into distinct thematic categories.

The process shows that researchers need to establish logical structure while making interpretive decisions to achieve proper research goal alignment with data analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The instructor used written reflections together with classroom observation notes to document discussions and activities, which helped to establish multiple sources of evidence that increased the depth of analysis.

Validity and Reliability

Establishing research validity through qualitative research requires researchers to demonstrate research reliability (Golafshani, 2003; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The research team used peer evaluation to assess the trustworthiness of their analysis because they needed to maintain authentic contextual data from their study. The external expert evaluated the thematic framework through qualitative research assessment while providing essential input about the research. The research process benefits from peer review because it increases research credibility while reducing bias in data interpretation and enhancing research validity (Patton, 2002). The research team used expert insights to develop thematic analysis, which ensured their research findings matched the actual data they collected.

Ethical Considerations

The research team gave study details to participants before starting the study. Students voluntarily consented to participate through an informed consent process conducted via institutional communication platforms. Students participated in the study without any impact from their involvement on their academic assessment, which depended only on standard course evaluation methods. Participants were assured that all answers would be kept confidential and that their identities would not be revealed during data collection. The research team followed ethical guidelines throughout the study to protect participant privacy and maintain academic research standards.

Findings And Discussion:

The analysis of learner reflections together with classroom observations showed that students had positive reactions to the use of the documentary *Home* in ELCS laboratory instruction. The first-year engineering students showed high engagement levels through their extensive reflections, which demonstrated their active participation in both discussions and group work. Three major themes emerged from the analysis:

1. Document-based learning through documentaries improved students' understanding of environmental issues.
2. The documentary allowed students to apply their classroom knowledge to current global environmental issues.
3. The use of documentaries in language learning brought added value to students' overall learning experience. The report presents findings and discussions in combination, allowing a complete understanding of learner experiences while showing how new educational themes fit into teaching practices and sustainable learning tracks.

Theme 1: Documentaries Evoke Students' Environmental Awareness

The first major theme emerging from the analysis shows how documentary exposure developed environmental awareness and emotional engagement with planetary concerns for students. The documentary experience showed learners their environmental relationship, which led them to understand resource exploitation and development processes. Educational research shows that effective learning experiences require both emotional engagement and cognitive understanding as essential components of their design. The documentary established an emotional bond which led students to evaluate their environmental beliefs according to the study. Several student reflections illustrate this response:

“Little did I realise how selfish we have been while chasing development, modernisation, and digitalisation until I watched this documentary... what have we done to our lovely planet over the years as a result of our irresponsible behaviour?” (Student 10, ln. 2–3)

“To be honest, the documentary left me a sense of mixed feelings. From excitement to have a chance to see the very initial appearance and beauty of the globe to the sadness of the lifestyle of the owner of the Earth, flora and fauna had been changed negatively due to humans' development.” (Student 4, ln. 12–13)

“I had been shocked by the truth as I did not know humans were taking so much from our original roots. We abused all the resources on the planet greedily

without preserving and conserving what should belong to it.” (Student 27, ln. 7–8)

The documentary made students show their ecological knowledge through emotional awareness of human-driven environmental destruction. The ELCS laboratory activities helped students develop environmental values through their process of proving which solution they would support through their research work. According to research by Tadaki Sinner and Chan (2017), perceptions of the human–environment relationship influence decision-making processes concerning environmental responsibility. Undergraduate students who study technical education become future decision-makers because their work will determine sustainability results in their professional careers. The student explained to others the shared obligation which all people must fulfil.

“We, as inhabitants of the world, share the same planet and must be careful and considerate not to put other people and the environment in dreadful situations.” (Student 22, ln. 6–7)

Thus, another student emphasised the global span of local activities:

“Our actions will have direct implications and repercussions not only in the place where we stay but also in places in other parts of the world.” (Student 5, ln. 18)

Students acknowledged that past environmental damage remains permanent, but they believed that dedicated efforts could lead to gradual environmental improvements. The research findings showed that participants displayed their first signs of behavioural change through their reflective assessments. The movie used a repeating phrase which stated, “*it is too late to be a pessimist*”, to create strong motivation for viewers. Students reported making minor yet significant changes to their daily routines after they watched the movie.

“This line left me with a huge sense of involvement to take actions towards making the world greener. I have started doing it, and I feel good about making differences.” (Student 4, ln. 28–30)

“I have benefited greatly from the video, as my sensitivity and attitude towards the environment are now increased and I care more about my potential actions and habits.” (Student 22, ln. 67)

The students demonstrated their understanding of sustainability through their evaluations of how their future work roles would impact environmental protection. The engineering students explored various design options, including the creation of energy-saving technologies and the development of environmentally sustainable infrastructure. The participants changed their daily activities by evaluating their plastic consumption patterns and waste production habits. The reflection contained the following observation:

“I have made a commitment to change bit by bit, to get a reusable straw, and to always bring a food container and a water bottle.” (Student 13, ln. 62)

The environmental responsibility development process proceeds through the gradual implementation of minor behavioural modifications which people display. The reflections showed that students developed their environmental values because these values shape their understanding of resource management and conservation practices. One participant emphasised the importance of water as a life-sustaining resource, stating that water should be

treated as a precious commodity. The second student showed active responsibility through his actions, which he took to protect his environment.

“If we wait for a superhero to come and save the world, it will take forever...better than waiting, let us be the superhero ourselves because I believe we are all superheroes in our stories.” (Student 1, ln. 16)

The reflections show that people have developed better skills to analyse information while taking personal responsibility for their duty to protect the environment. The findings match previous studies which demonstrate that people change their behaviour when they acquire environmental information and develop emotional awareness (Heimlich & Ardoin, 2008; Liu, 2018). The students showed an ecocentric approach to environmental issues because they understood ecosystems to possess inherent value which existed beyond their value as human resources (McMillan, Wright, & Beazley, 2004; Grey, Whyte, & Curry, 2018). The documentary narratives provided students with a platform to enhance their critical thinking skills and reflective abilities about environmental sustainability.

Theme 2: Documentary Connects Students with Current Environmental Issues

The second theme shows that the documentary allowed students to link their classroom learning with modern-day environmental problems that exist worldwide. Through visual storytelling and real-world case studies, learners encountered issues such as poverty, consumerism, migration, industrialisation, and environmental degradation in diverse global contexts. Students showed they could connect their personal experiences and their existing knowledge to the documentary material. One learner made a connection between global warming and the climate changes she observed during her travels.

“From personal experience, the impact of global warming is also something I feel as hill stations are no longer as cold as they were when I visited as a kid.” (Student 30, ln. 44)

The documentary showed two environmental issues that people raised as concerns: deforestation and biodiversity loss. Students recognised that environmental degradation in remote areas of the world would create wider ecological effects, which helped them understand how all countries around the world remained connected. Students used documentary evidence to build their analytical reasoning skills, which they applied during their discussions and reflection activities. One participant observed:

“I would say that the oil and gas industry is a huge problem for the environment. The documentary tells us that humans’ continuous greed for energy sources means that we will always look to dig up more oil, natural gas, coal, etc. This industry massively pollutes the ocean due to oil spillage.” (Student 26, ln. 76)

The documentary served as a reference framework which required students to use it as evidence for their arguments while they completed their communication assignments. The film enabled students to see how different geographical areas changed their ecosystems compared with their home regions. The scenes that showed extensive city development alongside artificial landscapes revealed how quickly development and consumer behaviour patterns damaged natural ecosystems. The representations enabled students to explore environmental issues beyond their immediate geographical area.

Global documentaries such as *Home* transcend geographical and cultural boundaries, enabling learners to engage with universal environmental concerns. Vaughan-Lee (2015) explains that documentaries help people learn by showing them international facts and new ideas about sustainability problems which exist outside their local area. This specific documentary has themes that reflect the contemporary global issues which make the viewers reflect on themselves in a critical way.

Theme 3: Effective Use of Documentaries Enhances Students' Learning Experience

The third finding is that using documentaries in class really helped students learn more about the environment and think for themselves. The ELCS laboratory framework used group discussions and reflection to help students share their thoughts on issues and solutions while looking at different perspectives (Liu, 2018; Stern, Powell, & Hill, 2014).

Many students said they did not know much about issues before watching the documentary. When we observed the classes, we saw that students often had an understanding of the environment, which they got from textbooks and awareness campaigns. One student said that before this, he only knew facts about environmental problems, but he did not understand how human actions affect the earth. Another student said that they learned about sustainability earlier in school. They did not get to practice it in a meaningful way, just doing things like recycling and crafts with reusable materials, which did not really help them understand it deeply.

The study found that the documentary kept the students engaged throughout, using pictures, narration and sound to hold their attention. The documentary-based instructional materials improved student learning because students gained knowledge while developing their ability to think critically and participate in classroom discussions about environmental issues. Barbas, Paraskevopoulos, and Stamou (2009) showed that narrative documentaries serve as effective teaching instruments because they combine environmental issues with personal stories that keep viewers emotionally connected through their storytelling methods. The learner described this experience with the following statement:

“The documentary certainly did a good job in stirring up my emotions and feelings. For most parts of the video, I could associate strong emotions to certain visual information presented.” (Student 28, ln. 79)

Another student found visual media to be an effective learning tool because he believed that textual sources did not successfully express the urgent nature of environmental emergencies.

“Merely reading books and newspapers is often very hard for me to relate and imagine the seriousness of an issue, as there are mostly just words.” (Student 37, ln. 65)

The combination of music and visual elements together with visual arts created a strong emotional connection with the audience. Students observed that the documentary's background music together with its emotional and sad visual elements created stronger emotional reactions, which supported environmental protection messages. The first reflection showed that:

“I was really inspired by every scene in the video; it made me want to watch until the end. Every scene from this documentary caught my attention, and I did not want to miss out on any details.” (Student 18, ln. 97)

The responses demonstrate how visual elements, sound elements and storytelling elements help people maintain their focus while they learn and practice language skills needed to understand concepts. Environmental education scholars argue that effective sustainability education requires not only knowledge acquisition but also the development of practical skills, ethical awareness, and responsible attitudes (Cebrián & Junyent, 2015). The researchers used classroom observations to determine that students demonstrated their ability to participate in knowledgeable discussions and make environmental assessments by using documentary evidence. Learners appreciated that the documentary grounded its narratives in scientific facts and research-based evidence. The student made this observation:

“The video is also relevant as it utilises plenty of facts to support and prove its claims.” (Student 3, ln. 12–13)

The research demonstrates that Van Dijck's (2006) theory about multimedia presentations proves scientific claims through their use of audiovisual content and spoken words, and visual data shows their scientific proof through visual evidence. Documentaries function as scientific relationship bridges which enable public access to complex scientific knowledge while presenting it in a way that people can understand. The research findings show that documentaries used by teachers to educate students bring better educational results than when students watch documentaries without guidance, according to Liu (2018). The ELCS laboratory used documentary-based teaching methods to help students understand environmental problems while they developed their communication skills, reflective thinking abilities and group learning skills, which enhanced their total learning experience.

Theme 4: Documentary-Based Learning Supports Language Development

The research study examined two main aspects. The research proved that students learned to use English language skills when they studied for their English Language and Communication Skills (ELCS) laboratory. Students in documentary-based instruction developed their English skills through active participation in authentic communication situations, which included listening, speaking and writing their thoughts.

Students improved their listening skills because they heard real documentary narration which included different accents and specialised vocabulary from their field of study. Students learned to express their understanding of language through visual elements, which helped them process information more easily and understand better.

The students developed their speaking skills through controlled group discussions and class-wide interaction sessions. Students expressed their viewpoints while defending their points of view, and they exchanged understanding about the environmental issues presented in the documentary. The activities helped first-year engineering students who were new to English-medium instruction to develop their spoken English skills.

The reflective writing assignment helped students develop academic writing skills because they had to combine different sources of information while presenting their personal opinions and assessing worldwide matters through correct language usage. The documentary served as a common reference point, enabling learners to organise ideas coherently and employ topic-specific vocabulary related to sustainability, science, and global citizenship.

The way in which we taught using documentaries really worked to get students excited

about learning English. This is extremely important because when learners are motivated, they do better at learning languages. Students said they were more interested and paid attention more, which meant they took part in class more and kept working on tasks. The results show that using documentaries to teach really helps students learn English while they are studying subjects.

Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals

The study shows that teaching with documentaries meets the education goals set by the United Nations. Students who used *Home* as the primary source of material learned about problems that are being faced by the world like climate change, which is connected to the goal of taking action on climate change (SDG 13) and being responsible with what we use and make (SDG 12) and taking care of the earth and its animals (SDG 15) and making cities better places to live (SDG 11). These are all part of the United Nations goals, like the one about climate action, the one about use of resources, the one about keeping the earth healthy and the one about making cities good places to live. The learners' reflections showed they developed better comprehension about how human activities such as industrialisation, excessive resource consumption, deforestation, and urban expansion contribute to environmental degradation. Through this knowledge development, people developed a collective environmental responsibility which matched the SDG framework's requirements for joint efforts and sustainable decision-making processes. The students showed they planned to reduce their plastic waste, protect resources, and apply sustainable methods in their upcoming jobs. The documentary made engineering students think about how technological progress and infrastructure development affect environmental issues.

The study demonstrates how language classrooms function as educational platforms for sustainability education by integrating SDG-related themes into ELCS instruction, which uses documentary films for teaching. The use of documentary-based multimodal pedagogy enables students to develop their language skills while creating environmentally responsible global citizens who support sustainable development objectives.

Conclusion

The current study shows how documentaries and visual media can be the primary source of material in teaching and how they aid learners in understanding global environmental issues as well as proficiency in using the English Language. It is found that documentary films are an interesting way to teach English since they provide authentic and contemporary information, presented through deep research, and help students understand sustainability topics effectively. This method, combined with collaborative learning, makes students more interested in environmental issues and better at communicating their ideas among their peers.

The documentary "Home" helped students think critically and discuss issues emotionally, which is much needed in the current generation. Students became more aware of challenges they should get involved in and cared more about sustainability, resource use and ecological responsibility. The documentary's cinematic visuals and storyline helped students connect classroom discussions to contemporary environmental issues in the world. This made them think about mending their routines and responsibilities as future professionals, especially in engineering and technological fields, as they are a part of the wider spectrum. The study also

proves that the educators can benefit from utilising media resources that provide a lot of context, which is not really possible in a conventional classroom. Using documentaries in ELCS lab sessions made them more interactive and engaging. Students improved their listening and speaking skills by discussing real-world problems.

This research suggests that language learning works best when combined with global ecological issues, making students competent communicators and responsible global citizens. The research is new because it shows how documentary-based learning can be used in English language teaching rather than treating environmental education as a separate field; it should be considered a multidisciplinary zone. It also shows that language instructors can teach sustainability themes while achieving their communication goals in the classroom because the future of betterment begins with the early days of education.

However, the study has some limitations. It only involved a group of students from one engineering institution, which limits its generalizability. Future research should try educational methods on various groups of students from multiple colleges and disciplines in a heterogeneous approach. Long-term studies that measure behavioural and language development over time will provide insights into using documentaries and visual media as the primary source for teaching. The research demonstrates that using documentaries in English language courses helps students develop language skills and environmental awareness through classroom practice and beyond. Documentary-based teaching methods and sustainable development practices will certainly help students become global citizens and promote awareness and sustainability.

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