

**USING CLIMATE CHANGE LITERATURE TO INTEGRATE  
CLIMATE CHANGE EDUCATION IN ENGLISH FOR YOUNG  
LEARNERS**

**A THESIS**

**by:**

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***Magister* Program in Language Education**



***MAGISTER* PROGRAM IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION  
FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION  
SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY  
PALEMBANG**

**2025**

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**Day : Monday**

**Date : July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

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## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned,

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Certify that the thesis entitled **"Using Climate Change Literature to Integrate Climate Change Education in English for Young Learners"** is my work, and I did not do any plagiarism or inappropriate quotation against the ethics and rules commended by the Ministry of Education of Republic of Indonesia Number 17, 2010 regarding plagiarism in higher education. Therefore, I deserve to face court if I am found to have plagiarized this work.

Palembang, July 28, 2025

The Undersigned,



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## DEDICATION

*With deep gratitude and endless love, I dedicate this thesis to those who have always been by my side at every step of my journey...*

### *My parents*

*I dedicate this thesis to my parents, my father and my mother who always support me to finish my college and always be there for me. To my sister who also wish me to finish my thesis as soon as I can. Thank you for being such a supportive, caring, and loving family.*

*My achievements throughout this academic journey are deeply rooted in the endless love, sacrifices, and steadfast prayers of those who have stood by me. This thesis stands as a heartfelt testament to their unwavering support and boundless encouragement that empowered me to overcome every obstacle.*

### MOTTO

*"Every step forward is a step closer to success."*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*Bismillahirrahmanirrahim*, all praises and gratitude are due to Allah Subhanahu Wata'ala, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful, the Almighty, and the Ruler of all creation, for granting the writer the strength, guidance, and ability to complete this academic endeavor. Peace and blessings be upon the Prophet Muhammad SAW, who has been a guiding light for all humanity. This thesis was written as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for attaining a Master's degree in the Magister Program in Language Education at Sriwijaya University. On this occasion, the writer would like to express her sincere gratitude and appreciation to the following individuals and parties:

1. Dr. Hartono, M.A., Dean of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Sriwijaya University, for fostering an academic environment that supported the completion of this thesis.
2. Sary Silvhiany, M. Pd., M.A., Ph.D., and Dr. Rita Inderawati, M. Pd. the writer's advisors, for their invaluable guidance, insightful feedback, and encouragement throughout the research and writing process.
3. All lecturers and staff of the Magister Program in Language Education at Sriwijaya University, for their knowledge, support, and assistance in the academic journey.
4. All participants and the school teacher where the study took place willingly contributed to this study, enabling the researcher to gather essential data for the research.

Palembang, July 28, 2025  
The Writer



Arya Muhaimin



# USING CLIMATE CHANGE LITERATURE TO INTEGRATE CLIMATE CHANGE EDUCATION IN ENGLISH FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates how children's literature can be utilized as an effective medium to integrate climate change education into English Language Teaching (ELT) for young learners. Conducted at SDN 115 Palembang, the research implemented a design-based research approach using two Indonesian picture books, *My Clay Batik* and *Protecting the Palace*, as central learning materials. Over eight weeks, 56 fifth-grade students engaged in lessons combining climate change topics with English language skills. Data were gathered through classroom observations, student worksheets, questionnaires, and interviews. The findings reveal that the use of climate-themed picture books significantly improved students' environmental literacy, vocabulary, and engagement. Students demonstrated an increased awareness of environmental issues, expressed personal responsibility for the planet, and showed improved comprehension of climate-related concepts in both their spoken and written English. The integration of climate education into ELT not only enhanced students' language development but also encouraged them to adopt more sustainable attitudes and behaviors. This study emphasizes the potential of picture books as powerful tools for fostering environmental awareness in English language classrooms. It suggests that climate change education can be meaningfully embedded in language learning to nurture eco-literate, critically thinking, and socially responsible young learners.

**Keywords:** *Climate Change Education, Children's Literature, English for Young Learners (EYL), Picture Books, English Education*

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background

Climate change is one of the most pressing challenges of our time. As the world faces increasingly difficult environmental conditions, instilling environmental literacy in children from an early age becomes essential. Education is an excellent instrument in this effort, but there are still gaps in connecting young students with the intricacies of environmental issues. Experts in environmental science and educational psychology recognize the power of narrative to inspire and teach, highlighting stories' unique ability to express complex ideas in a familiar way. Education has an important role in empowering students with sustainability competencies by educating individuals who have sufficient abilities to do environmentally friendly jobs (green jobs), namely jobs that require expertise (Okada & Gray, 2023).

The role of the younger generation in fighting climate change will be very important. Today's young generation will be the one facing the negative consequences of climate problems in the future. Their lifestyle may determine the development of future climate change. Therefore, it is important to understand how young people view climate change mitigation and what factors support their hopes and beliefs in active action in the future (Ratinen & Uusiautti, 2020).

Climate change education is intended to help society, especially the younger generation, in: (1) understanding and dealing with climate change issues; (2) encourage lifestyle changes; and (3) adapt to changing local conditions. Furthermore, reforms in the educational environment must be implemented at all levels, using both formal and informal approaches, starting from a young age [5]. Climate change research must start early to prevent or reduce the impact of climate change on humanity. Meanwhile, basic education is an important instrument for developing environmentally conscious individuals, especially those who care about climate change (Gunamantha & Dantes, 2019).

Climate literate individuals understand the basic principles of the Earth's climate system, seek accurate scientific information, engage in meaningful discussions about climate issues and change, and make responsible decisions that may impact the climate, Nayan et al., (2020). They also recognize the fundamental relationship between climate and human life and how climate affects human health (Masitoh, et al., 2025). They recognize the close connection between climate and human life, including how climate impacts human health. Moreover, they are able to critically evaluate the validity of different climate-related arguments and use reliable information to support their decisions (Nurhaliza et al., 2024). In other words, climate change education as proposed should pave the way for young people to understand the science of climate change, prepare them to participate as informed citizens capable of evaluating controversies and arguments effectively, and empower them to make informed decisions reason about the issue. To achieve the goals of climate change education, it is first important to establish the audience's attitudes and values regarding climate change, Higde et al., (2017).

“Awareness” and “understanding” can be seen in three connected ways: learning facts, feeling related to the topic, and wanting to take action. Learning facts means students understand basic ideas about climate change, such as what causes global warming, why recycling is important, and how trees help keep the air clean. It also means they know important environmental words and can explain main problems. Research shows that environmental education improves students' knowledge, attitudes, intentions, and behavior (Boissiere et al., 2022).

Feeling connected is about how students care about the environmental issues, like feeling sorry for animals harmed by climate change or worrying about Earth's future. It includes feeling responsible and caring because of the stories in the picture books. Studies highlight the role of emotional connection and empathy as essential for learning about sustainability and motivating action (Eilam & Trop, 2022). Wanting to act means students say they want to do things, like turning off lights to save energy, making less trash, or asking friends and family to care more about the environment. It is found that knowledge alone is an important first step in



climate action, especially for young people, who show greater willingness to act when they understand the issues (Nicholls et al., 2025). By looking at these three parts, the study shows how children's books can help young learners understand climate change and encourage them to care and act while learning English.

Young children who are educated about climate will understand basic concepts about the Earth's climate system, learn how to find accurate scientific information about climate, be able to dialogue about climate issues and climate change in a meaningful way, and be able to make responsible and intelligent decisions about actions that can affect the climate. This research will focus on the use of teaching materials and the development of "Climate Change"-based learning plans in teaching English, by utilizing active methods, digital resources, and direct interactions to increase students' literacy towards climate change at the elementary school level (Jasmine et al., 2025). Research on climate change-based education has been carried out several times, including several examples. First, integration of environmental education in elementary schools (Sukma et al., 2020). Second, Climate Change Literacy of Elementary School Students in Buleleng Regency, Bali Province, Indonesia (Gunamantha & Dantes, 2019). Third, Towards Action Literature: Picture Books on Environmentally Friendly Information and Critical Engagement in Combating Climate Change (Rybak, 2023). Fourth, Changing the stories we tell about climate change: from 'problem' to 'action' (De Meyer et al., 2021). There has been no research found that uses climate change education in teaching English in elementary schools.

In this study, the term "awareness and understanding" is defined across three dimensions: (1) factual knowledge about climate change and its causes, (2) emotional engagement such as concern or care for the environment, and (3) action-based awareness, meaning the students' ability to connect their learning with eco-friendly behavior in daily life. These dimensions reflect both cognitive and affective goals and align with UNESCO's (2017) framework for Education for Sustainable Development, which promotes integrated development of knowledge, values, and action.

## **1.2 Research Problems**

Based on the background of the study, the following questions were developed to represent the problems of the study:

- 1) How can children's literature be used as an effective tool to increase young students' awareness and understanding of climate change?
- 2) What impact does integrating climate change topics into the English curriculum have on students' interest and awareness about environmental issues?

## **1.3 Research Objectives**

The goals of this study were as follows in relation to the above research problems:

- 1) To find out the effectiveness of children's literature in increasing young students' awareness and understanding of climate change.
- 2) To find out impacts in students' interest and awareness about environmental issues after integrating climate change topics into the English curriculum.

## **1.4 The Significance of the Study**

It is expected that this study could contribute some benefits to the following parties;

### **1.4.1 Significance for Teachers**

**Professional Development and Skill Enhancement:** This research offers teachers an opportunity to expand their instructional repertoire by integrating climate change education into the English language curriculum. It empowers teachers with novel pedagogical strategies that combine environmental content with language learning, fostering their professional growth and adaptability in an evolving educational landscape.

**Enhanced Teaching Materials and Resources:** Through the development of specialized "Climate Change"-based learning plans and the use of digital tools, teachers gain access to innovative teaching materials that are designed to make complex environmental issues accessible and engaging for young learners. This not only enhances their teaching effectiveness but also enriches the educational resources available at their disposal.

Role in Shaping Future Climate Advocates: Teachers play a critical role in shaping students' perceptions and knowledge about the world. By equipping teachers with the skills and tools to effectively teach about climate change, this research positions them as pivotal figures in developing the next generation of informed citizens and environmental stewards, thereby amplifying their impact on society.

#### **1.4.2 Significance for Students**

Building a Foundation of Climate Literacy: Students benefit from an early and robust introduction to climate change through the English curriculum, helping them to understand complex environmental issues from a young age. This foundational knowledge is crucial for developing informed attitudes and behaviors towards the environment as they grow.

Enhancing Engagement and Interest in Environmental Issues: By incorporating climate change topics into English lessons using children's literature and interactive activities, this research aims to increase students' engagement and interest in environmental matters. This approach makes learning about climate change relatable and accessible, sparking curiosity and ongoing interest in ecological stewardship.

Development of Critical Thinking and Decision-Making Skills: The integration of climate change discussions within the English curriculum encourages students to develop critical thinking skills as they analyze texts, engage in discussions, and evaluate diverse viewpoints on environmental issues. This not only enhances their language skills but also empowers them to make informed decisions about environmental actions in their personal and future professional lives.

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