EcoLingua Curriculum

Digitally Enhanced Pedagogy for Integrating Environmental Issues into Language Teaching

COMPARATIVE REPORT ON HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL ELT CURRICULUM and MATERIAL ANALYSIS

(Work Package 2: EcoLingua Curriculum Analysis and Integration Strategies – EC-AIS)

This comparative report has been prepared within the framework of Work Package 2 of the EcoLingua project. It is based on national reports developed by project partners from Spain, Italy, Lithuania, and Turkey to provide a cross-country analysis of English language teaching curricula and materials with respect to ecological and environmental content at the high school level.

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1. Introduction

This comparative report has been prepared within the framework of Work Package 2 of the Erasmus+ KA220-SCH project titled *"EcoLingua Curriculum: Digitally Enhanced Pedagogy for Integrating Environmental Issues into Language Teaching"*. The overarching aim of the project is to promote climate and sustainability awareness in primary and secondary education by embedding environmental themes into English Language Teaching (ELT) practices and materials. Work Package 2, in particular, focuses on the comprehensive analysis of national curricula and ELT teaching resources across four participating countries—**Spain, Italy, Lithuania, and Turkey**—in order to examine how ecological and climate-related themes are currently integrated into language education and to identify areas of good practice, gaps, and opportunities for improvement.

The current report specifically addresses the **high school level**, also referred to as **upper secondary education** (typically ages 15/16–18), and builds upon previously completed analyses for the primary and lower secondary levels. In the national education systems of the partner countries, this stage marks a critical transitional phase where learners are expected to acquire not only advanced linguistic competencies aligned with **B1–B2+ CEFR levels**, but also critical thinking, intercultural awareness, and global citizenship values. These characteristics render high school ELT curricula particularly suitable for the integration of **sustainability-related themes**, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and environmental activism.

The motivation for this comparative report arises from the EcoLingua project's central premise: **language education should not be isolated from contemporary global challenges**, especially when those challenges are transnational and deeply intertwined with the future of younger generations. Language learning, particularly in English as a global lingua franca, offers unique potential for addressing ecological topics by equipping students with both the vocabulary and communicative strategies needed to understand, reflect on, and act upon environmental issues at local and global scales.

Moreover, the integration of environmental themes into ELT supports key educational priorities set forth by the **European Green Deal**, the **UN Sustainable Development Goals (especially SDG 4.7 and SDG 13)**, and the **European Commission's Council Recommendation on learning for environmental sustainability (2022/C 243/01)**. These frameworks urge member states to foster climate and sustainability competence in all levels of education, with particular emphasis on cross-curricular integration, participatory pedagogies, and teacher development. In line with these aims, the EcoLingua project seeks to align language education with the broader educational mission of preparing learners to become **eco-literate, socially responsible, and globally engaged citizens**.

The present report synthesizes findings from four national research studies prepared by institutional partners, each of which included a twofold analysis: (1) a review of official ELT curriculum frameworks and learning outcomes for high school levels, and (2) an analysis of widely used English language textbooks and supplementary materials, with a focus on ecological content. While each country exhibits distinctive governance structures, curricular traditions, and pedagogical practices, this comparative report provides a unified framework for evaluating and discussing the degree to which climate and environmental themes are represented, both **explicitly and implicitly**, in high school ELT contexts.

Through this lens, the report aims to answer key questions:

- How do national curricula and official ELT policies incorporate environmental topics at the high school level?
- What types of environmental vocabulary, themes, and skills are covered in high school English textbooks and materials?
- Are these materials consistent with the goals of fostering climate literacy and global responsibility through language learning?
- What gaps or inconsistencies exist across countries, and what promising practices can be shared across contexts?

In doing so, the report offers both descriptive and critical insights, providing a foundation for the **design of digital, ecologically oriented ELT materials** to be developed in subsequent work

packages. Ultimately, this report serves as a resource for curriculum designers, teacher educators, textbook developers, and policy-makers committed to **integrating environmental sustainability into language education in meaningful and pedagogically sound ways**.

2. Overview of National Curricula

2.1 Spain

In the Spanish education system, high school corresponds to the two-year **Bachillerato** stage, typically covering ages 16 to 18 and preparing students for university entrance. The curriculum for this stage is governed by the **Organic Law on Education (LOMLOE)**, which establishes the **basic curriculum framework at the national level**, while regional education authorities have the autonomy to adapt and supplement the curriculum. Individual schools are further granted flexibility in terms of pedagogical organization and material selection. This decentralized structure results in **diverse implementation practices**, although the overarching goals and competencies are commonly shared across regions.

Within the official curriculum, **environmental sustainability, ecology, and climate action** are explicitly referenced across multiple competency areas, both in the **general educational objectives** and in subject-specific descriptors. In the overarching learning goals of the Bachillerato curriculum, students are expected to "critically assess the contribution of science and technology to changes in living conditions" and to "promote a responsible and committed attitude in the fight against climate change and in the defense of sustainable development." These statements reflect a clear policy-level alignment with the priorities of the European Green Deal and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4.7.

The integration of sustainability themes is further reinforced through the **Key General Competencies**, especially:

- **Citizen Competence (CC)**, which encourages the development of an ecosocially responsible lifestyle and ethical commitment to sustainability;

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- **Digital Competence (DC)**, which emphasizes the environmental impact of technology and the need for sustainable digital practices;
- **Personal, Social and Learning-to-learn Competence (PSLLC)**, which promotes physical and mental well-being as part of a sustainable lifestyle;
- **Cultural Awareness and Expression Competence (CAEC)**, which includes fostering creativity through sustainable artistic and cultural projects.

Specific references to sustainability also appear within the **subject-specific curriculum for English I and II**, which are the core ELT subjects at the high school level. Particularly, **Specific Competence 6** for both courses requires students to "foster the development of a shared culture and citizenship committed to sustainability and democratic values." Assessment criteria such as "attending to ecosocial and democratic values" and "applying strategies that respect justice, equity, and equality" suggest a curricular orientation toward critical, intercultural, and ethically grounded language use.

At the level of textbook implementation, the lack of a centralized list of approved materials allows **each school or region to choose their own textbooks**, which leads to significant variability. Nonetheless, the **Burlington Skills for Bachillerato 2** textbook, which was selected for analysis in the Spanish national report, offers several concrete examples of environmental content:

- **Unit 3 (City Life)** includes passages on **urban sprawl**, pollution, and destruction of natural habitats, along with writing tasks involving connectors of cause and result related to environmental degradation.
- **Unit 5 (What's On?)** features images of climate demonstrations and includes reflective prompts regarding climate activism, though the accompanying listening text lacks thematic alignment.
- In **the workbook**, students encounter reading passages on **recycled materials, sea level rise, wildlife corridors**, and **sustainable urban futures**, as well as tasks discussing **banning cars in cities**, and **the sensory experience of pollution** in urban settings.

- Additionally, in a multiple-choice exam practice section, there is a critical reading about **natural versus artificial grass**, addressing water scarcity, plastic pollution, and habitat loss.

Despite these inclusions, several **gaps and inconsistencies** were identified in the analysis. For instance, some texts address issues like traffic or urban design **without linking them explicitly to climate or ecological frameworks**. Similarly, while public transport is occasionally mentioned, it is framed in terms of convenience rather than sustainability. Moreover, environmental themes often appear in **reading or vocabulary sections**, with less frequent integration into speaking, writing, or project-based activities, which may limit their pedagogical depth and student engagement.

Overall, the Spanish high school ELT curriculum and textbook ecosystem demonstrate a **clear structural openness** to integrating ecological themes, particularly at the level of objectives and competencies. However, there remains a **need for more consistent and meaningful implementation** across materials and classroom practices. The potential for embedding climate-related topics into speaking, debating, and creative writing tasks is largely underutilized, and the **implicit treatment of sustainability topics** may dilute their impact. Strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration (e.g., with science or geography teachers via CLIL) and enhancing the role of ecological themes in **task-based and communicative activities** could significantly improve the coherence between curriculum intent and classroom realities.

2.2. Lithuania

In Lithuania, upper-secondary education is provided in Grades 11–12 (also referred to as **Grades III–IV** in gymnasiums), and English is a compulsory subject across all educational institutions, in line with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), aiming for **B2–B2+ proficiency levels** by the end of Grade 12. The ELT curriculum is coordinated nationally by the **Ministry of Education, Science and Sport**, with implementation oversight by the **National Education Agency (Nacionalinė švietimo agentūra, NŠA)**. Schools are granted considerable pedagogical autonomy, especially in the

selection of textbooks and the implementation of interdisciplinary learning approaches such as **Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)**.

The national curriculum for foreign languages in upper-secondary education emphasizes **communication competence, critical thinking, intercultural awareness**, and increasingly, **21st-century skills** such as digital literacy, civic responsibility, and environmental awareness. Sustainability-related themes are embedded through both subject-specific and cross-curricular strategies, reflecting Lithuania's alignment with EU education and sustainability policy goals.

The ELT curriculum for Grades 11–12 includes **environmental themes as part of its overarching aims**, particularly through interdisciplinary learning units that address:

- **Climate change prevention**
- **Circular economy and responsible consumption**
- **Sustainable cities and settlements**
- **Waste sorting and ecological behavior**
- **Living environment and biodiversity**

According to the national report, schools often incorporate these topics using **CLIL methodologies**, where English is used as the medium of instruction in subjects such as geography, biology, or environmental science. Although CLIL is not mandatory, it is **strongly encouraged** by national policy (e.g., through the *Mokykla 2030* strategy), and many schools offer partial or full CLIL integration depending on teacher qualifications and institutional resources.

Furthermore, the **project-based orientation** of the Lithuanian system offers fertile ground for embedding sustainability in ELT. Examples include student-designed campaigns on recycling and energy efficiency, debates on global climate policies, and collaborative writing projects on environmental activism. These activities, often coordinated in English, enhance both language proficiency and ecological literacy.

At the textbook level, Lithuanian schools predominantly use **internationally published ELT materials** aligned with CEFR levels, such as:

- *Beyond* (B1–B2) – Robert Campbell et al.
- *High Note* (Levels 4–5) – Lynda Edwards et al.
- *New Enterprise*, *Gateway*, and *Think* series – featuring sustainability content scattered throughout reading passages, vocabulary units, and listening tasks.
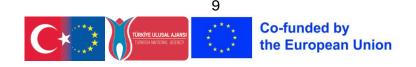
According to the national report, most of these textbooks contain **at least one unit** related to sustainability, typically focusing on:

- Renewable energy sources
- Pollution and its consequences
- Global warming and natural disasters
- Eco-friendly innovations and green careers

Teachers have the **freedom and responsibility to adapt textbook content** and often supplement with digital materials or national resources. The Lithuanian education portal (Švietimo portalas) provides downloadable lesson plans and digital tasks aligned with **eco-themes**, particularly for Grades 11 and 12. Moreover, the NŠA and affiliated agencies regularly publish **project modules**, such as *EcoStream* or *Le Moon*, which offer environmental education units that can be adapted for English-language instruction.

A notable example of curriculum-wide integration is the **"Sustainable School 2030"** initiative, which includes over 400 Lithuanian schools and promotes a self-evaluation system on ecological awareness, student participation in local climate action, and the inclusion of sustainability into daily teaching. Many English teachers contribute to this initiative by coordinating **school newspapers, blogs, or eco-journalism clubs** in English, encouraging students to communicate environmentally relevant topics through foreign language use.

Despite this generally positive landscape, the national report also highlights several **areas for development**:
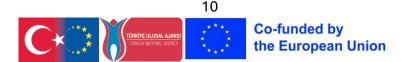
- The integration of environmental themes in core ELT materials is often **limited to reading comprehension or vocabulary sections**, with fewer examples of systematic integration into writing or speaking tasks.
- The **lack of Lithuanian-authored ELT materials** aligned with national ecological goals means that teachers rely heavily on adaptation and personal initiative.
- The **CLIL approach**, while promising, **requires stronger institutional support**, especially in teacher training and cross-departmental coordination.

Nevertheless, Lithuania's high school ELT system reflects a **strong orientation toward ecological education**, underpinned by **curricular flexibility, external funding (e.g., Erasmus+), and a national commitment to sustainability education**. The active involvement of teachers in international projects, the widespread use of CEFR-aligned global textbooks, and the presence of government-endorsed tools such as *Mokykla 2030* and *Scuola2030*-inspired platforms provide a robust framework for enhancing ecological literacy in English classrooms. With further investment in localized teaching resources and targeted professional development, Lithuania is well-positioned to serve as a **model for climate-conscious ELT practice** in upper-secondary education.

2.3 Turkey

In Turkey, high school education spans Grades 9 through 12, with English taught as a compulsory subject in all grade levels. The ELT curriculum, last revised in **2018** and still in force despite the introduction of the broader **"Türkiye Yüzyılı Maarif Modeli"** in 2024, is centrally developed and administered by the **Turkish Ministry of National Education (MEB)**. It is explicitly aligned with the **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)**, targeting **B1 to B2 levels** of language proficiency by the end of upper-secondary education. The curriculum promotes a **communicative approach** focusing on task-based, student-centered learning that integrates all four skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The primary aim of the 2018 high school ELT curriculum is to foster **autonomous, fluent, and effective language users** through the simulation of real-life communicative contexts. Learners

are expected to actively engage with language in meaningful, purposeful tasks that reflect authentic situations. The curriculum encourages **collaboration over competition**, project-based learning, and reflection as core strategies for developing both language competence and learner autonomy.

However, despite this progressive pedagogical framing, the **integration of environmental themes into the ELT curriculum remains limited and uneven**. Based on the national report and textbook analysis, **direct references to ecology, climate change, or sustainability are only sparsely embedded in a few thematic units**:

- In **Grade 9**, *Theme 4: Human in Nature* introduces texts and activities around nature, daily routines, and natural disasters. Although unit titles such as *"Take Care of Nature"* suggest ecological content, the language targets (e.g., "describe routines," "talk about abilities") do not strongly engage with environmental literacy or critical reflection on sustainability.
- In **Grade 12**, *Theme 8: Alternative Energy* offers the most explicit engagement with ecological topics. Students are introduced to vocabulary items such as *solar energy, wind power, geothermal, biofuel, and global warming*, with associated objectives like "describing problems" and "offering solutions." However, these are often treated in isolated reading or vocabulary exercises without deeper integration into productive skills or broader project-based inquiry.

Analysis of **approved textbooks**, such as *Uplift Grade 9* and *English Grade 9 Coursebook*, reveals similar limitations. While they include units with titles such as *"Nature Calls You"* or *"I Love Nature"*, the treatment of environmental content is generally **superficial**, focusing on lexical items (e.g., *forest, weather, natural disaster*) without providing meaningful context or real-world connections. In some cases, nature serves merely as a thematic backdrop for grammar exercises, rather than as a substantive topic of engagement. Moreover, key ecological concepts—such as **climate change, pollution, carbon footprint, biodiversity, or sustainability**—are either absent or appear only in Grade 12, and even then, **rarely used in productive tasks like debates, writing, or projects**.

The curriculum includes some **positive structural elements** that could support ecological integration, such as:

- Emphasis on **project-based learning** and **authentic assessment**, which could be leveraged for eco-themed tasks;
- Recognition of **English as a lingua franca**, encouraging students to engage with global topics including environmental issues;
- Focus on **communicative competence** and **strategic language use**, which aligns well with discussing and presenting sustainability-related content.

Nevertheless, the national report clearly identifies **critical gaps**. There is **no explicit inclusion of sustainability education as a curricular objective** in the ELT program. Environmental topics are neither cross-referenced with other disciplines (e.g., geography, biology) nor aligned with transversal competencies such as global citizenship or environmental responsibility. This is especially notable given that civic and environmental education has been emphasized in other parts of the national curriculum, such as social studies and science.

Another key shortcoming is the **absence of structured CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning)** in the Turkish high school context. While some individual schools may experiment with interdisciplinary English-medium projects, this practice is not formally supported or institutionally embedded. Similarly, there is no national strategy for providing **eco-themed ELT materials** or teacher training on integrating sustainability into language instruction.

Despite these limitations, the EcoLingua project offers important opportunities for **bridging the gap between language education and environmental sustainability in the Turkish context**. With appropriate professional development, targeted digital resources, and institutional encouragement, ELT teachers could begin embedding sustainability topics into listening texts, writing prompts, debates, and collaborative projects. Furthermore, leveraging environmental themes may also increase student engagement and motivation by linking language learning with real-world concerns relevant to students' lives and futures.

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In summary, while the Turkish high school ELT curriculum is communicatively robust and aligned with CEFR principles, it currently **lacks systematic integration of environmental and climate-related content**. There is significant potential to expand and deepen this integration through **curriculum renewal, textbook reform, and pedagogical innovation**, especially in the context of ongoing initiatives such as the EcoLingua project.

3. Textbook and Teaching Material Analysis

3.1 Spain

In Spain, the selection of English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks at the high school (Bachillerato) level is **decentralized**, allowing each autonomous community or even individual schools to choose their preferred materials. While this system provides pedagogical flexibility, it also leads to **variability in the depth and quality of environmental content** across textbooks. For the purpose of this report, the textbook *Burlington Skills for Bachillerato 2* was selected for analysis due to its wide use and accessibility. The textbook was examined for explicit and implicit coverage of **climate, ecology, sustainability, and related topics** in both the student's book and the accompanying workbook.

The analysis reveals that environmental topics are **present in several units**, though not consistently developed across all skills. For instance, in **Unit 3 (City Life)**, students are exposed to a reading passage about **urban sprawl** that highlights its negative impact on the environment, such as increased pollution, habitat destruction, and car dependency. The same unit includes a writing section on **connectors of cause, result, and purpose**, with model sentences like: "Consequently, animals' natural habitats are destroyed," and "Laws need to be enforced so that natural areas can be protected." These tasks show potential for integrating environmental literacy into grammar instruction and writing development.

Similarly, **Unit 5 (What's On?)** contains visual stimuli related to climate activism. An image shows protest signs with messages such as *"Climate Change is Real"*, and prompts students to reflect on the social responsibilities of celebrities. However, the **listening task in the same unit**

is thematically unrelated, missing an opportunity to reinforce the ecological theme through oral comprehension and discussion.

The workbook offers a richer inclusion of environmental content. In **Unit 3**, there are readings on **sustainable city planning**, the use of **recycled plastic pods**, the impact of **rising sea levels**, and proposals for **wildlife corridors** and **tree planting**. Other activities include texts questioning whether **cars should be banned from city centers**, and a piece titled *"The Smell of a City"*, where urban pollution is indirectly addressed through sensory descriptions. These materials offer real-world topics and integrate ecological issues in ways that could promote both language skills and environmental awareness.

However, the report also identifies several **gaps and limitations**. For instance:

- While certain vocabulary items such as *urban sprawl, pollution, litter, congestion,* and *clear land* appear in the **vocabulary lists**, they are not always used in productive tasks or extended writing.
- Environmental issues are **not consistently integrated across all units**, and **productive skills** (e.g., debates, opinion essays, role plays) are only occasionally used to engage students in critical reflection on ecological issues.
- Some units include **missed opportunities**: e.g., Unit 4 has a reading on seaweed farming but fails to connect this topic to sustainability or overpopulation, framing it instead as a health or food trend.
- In several cases, **transportation and public services** are discussed in terms of **efficiency or convenience**, rather than ecological impact, limiting their value for environmental education.

Moreover, **no government- or publisher-provided digital resources** were found to support teachers in expanding the environmental dimensions of the textbook. This contrasts with some other European systems (e.g., Italy or Lithuania), where national platforms such as *Scuola2030* or *Mokykla2030* provide structured ELT-appropriate sustainability content.

From a pedagogical standpoint, the textbook leans heavily on **reading comprehension and passive exposure to content**, rather than fostering critical dialogue or active engagement with environmental issues. While grammar, vocabulary, and writing tasks occasionally touch upon ecological themes, their treatment tends to be **fragmented and lacking in depth**. The absence of integrated projects, debates, or interdisciplinary tasks further limits the transformative potential of environmental content in ELT.

Nevertheless, the presence of relevant texts and vocabulary offers a **foundation for teacher-led innovation**. With appropriate scaffolding, teachers can build upon these materials to design speaking tasks, project work, or digital assignments that bring environmental themes to life. For instance, the text on urban sprawl could be extended into a debate about city planning, or the visual from Unit 5 could lead into a campaign-writing task on climate justice.

In conclusion, while *Burlington Skills for Bachillerato 2* includes **notable segments** on environmental themes, their **distribution is uneven**, and their **pedagogical potential is underutilized**. Without systemic support or structured guidance, the textbook alone cannot ensure a coherent or impactful integration of sustainability into the ELT classroom. However, with targeted teacher development and resource supplementation—as envisioned in the EcoLingua project—such materials can become effective tools for fostering **eco-linguistic awareness** among Spanish high school learners.

3.2 Italy

In the Italian upper-secondary education system, English Language Teaching (ELT) is delivered through diverse pathways including **Licei**, **Technical Institutes**, and **Vocational Schools**, each with varying instructional hours and objectives. While there is no single nationally mandated ELT textbook, schools often adopt **internationally published coursebooks** aligned with CEFR levels, especially those from major publishers such as Cambridge, Oxford, Pearson, and Express Publishing. The choice of textbooks is guided by national guidelines but remains at the discretion of school departments.

Environmental topics are **frequently introduced through Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL),** which is compulsory in the final year of all upper-secondary pathways and begins earlier in *Liceo Linguistico*. This structure allows for **environmentally oriented subjects such as biology, geography, or environmental science to be taught in English**, often using adapted or original materials. However, in mainstream ELT classes, the **integration of sustainability themes depends heavily on the textbook series adopted and the initiative of individual teachers**.

The Italian national report highlights that most upper-secondary ELT coursebooks include **at least one unit** thematically related to sustainability, though the **depth and treatment vary considerably**. For instance:

- In books such as *Think* (Cambridge) or *Life* (National Geographic Learning), students encounter units on **climate change, renewable energy, global warming, biodiversity, and plastic pollution**.
- Vocabulary sections commonly include items such as *carbon footprint, endangered species, deforestation, recycling, and green energy*.
- Listening and reading texts often feature **authentic materials** such as news articles, blog posts, or interviews with climate activists or scientists.

Writing tasks in these books sometimes ask students to:

- Write an opinion essay on **banning plastic bags** or **promoting electric vehicles**;
- Compose a letter of complaint about **environmental degradation**;
- Summarize an article on **renewable energy** or **urban sustainability**.

In more advanced levels (B2–C1), learners are invited to engage in **debates and structured discussions**, for example:

- "Should fast fashion be banned for environmental reasons?"
- "What role should youth play in climate activism?"
- "How can tourism become more sustainable?"

These tasks promote **critical thinking and argumentative writing**, aligned with CEFR descriptors and the overarching aims of eco-linguistic awareness.

However, the integration of environmental content in coursebooks often remains **compartmentalized**, typically confined to one unit without cross-unit coherence. Moreover:

- **Grammar sections rarely link with sustainability themes**, missing opportunities to contextualize structures like conditionals ("If we don't act now..."), modal verbs ("We must reduce emissions"), or passive voice ("Forests are being destroyed").
- **Project work and speaking tasks**, while included in many books, are often presented as optional extras, and **do not always include follow-up or assessment criteria**.
- Certain themes, such as **climate justice, indigenous knowledge, or environmental policy**, are underrepresented despite their relevance and interdisciplinary potential.

Notably, teachers often rely on **external resources** to enhance eco-related ELT content. Platforms such as:

- **Get Up and Goals!**, which offers SDG-focused ELT lesson plans;
- **Scuola2030**, which provides sustainability-linked teaching modules;
- **The British Council's Climate Connection**, featuring videos, lesson ideas, and student campaigns.

These resources allow teachers to design integrated lessons combining **environmental topics with language outcomes**, often through project-based learning. In some *licei*, teachers form interdisciplinary teams to coordinate English lessons with CLIL science classes, reinforcing eco-vocabulary and discourse strategies.

Despite these innovations, challenges remain:

- There is **no systemic national guidance** on how to link environmental education with ELT goals;
- Teachers receive **limited formal training** on embedding sustainability into language instruction;

- Coursebooks, while rich in global topics, sometimes **prioritize exam preparation over ecological engagement**, especially in final-year classes preparing for the Maturità exam.
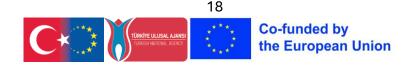
Nonetheless, Italy presents **a promising model** in terms of environmental integration into ELT, thanks to its CLIL infrastructure, civic education mandates, and access to well-curated external resources. Where teachers are empowered and supported, environmental themes are not only present but actively engaged with—through **debates, problem-solving tasks, simulations, and eco-report writing**. These practices contribute meaningfully to the EcoLingua objective of equipping learners with both **linguistic competence and ecological literacy**.

3.3 Lithuania

In Lithuania's upper-secondary education (Grades 11–12), English is a compulsory subject aligned with CEFR levels **B2–B2+**, and the selection of textbooks is decentralized but **guided by recommendations** from the National Education Agency (Nacionalinė švietimo agentūra, NŠA). Schools predominantly use **internationally recognized ELT series**, most of which are published in the UK, such as *Gateway*, *Beyond*, *New Enterprise*, *Think*, *Life*, and *High Note*. These books are supplemented by **digitally enhanced resources** offered through the national education portal (*Švietimo portalas*), as well as project-based and interdisciplinary materials created as part of government-supported initiatives such as *Mokykla 2030*.

The national report highlights that nearly all ELT textbooks in use at the upper-secondary level contain **at least one unit explicitly focused on environmental topics**. Common themes include:

- **Climate change and global warming**
- **Pollution (air, water, plastic)**
- **Renewable vs. non-renewable energy**
- **Biodiversity loss and conservation**
- **Recycling, responsible consumption, and sustainable lifestyles**

Vocabulary development sections frequently include eco-lexis such as *carbon footprint*, *composting*, *fossil fuels*, *solar power*, *endangered species*, *environmental footprint*, and *eco-friendly products*. Listening and reading comprehension texts often feature **authentic media**, including interviews with activists, news reports on deforestation, or blog entries about zero-waste living.

Several textbooks offer **grammar tasks contextualized within environmental themes**. For instance:

- Modals of obligation and advice (*We must reduce our waste; We should use public transport*).
- First and second conditionals (*If we don't act now, the planet will suffer*).
- Passive structures (*The forests are being destroyed by illegal logging*).

Writing tasks are particularly rich in ecological topics and are well-aligned with CEFR writing descriptors. Examples include:

- Writing an **opinion essay** on whether governments should ban plastic packaging;
- Drafting a **formal letter** to a local authority proposing green urban initiatives;
- Composing a **problem-solution article** about water scarcity;
- Designing a **leaflet** to promote a school-based recycling campaign.

Furthermore, **project-based tasks** and collaborative activities in these textbooks regularly include:

- Researching and presenting on a sustainability hero or movement;
- Preparing a group poster on "A Greener School";
- Holding mock UN climate summits or environmental debates.

In addition to textbooks, Lithuanian teachers frequently access **nationally developed environmental education modules**—many of which were designed through EU-funded projects (e.g., *Le Moon*, *EcoStream*)—that are available in English or can be adapted for English

instruction. These resources provide **lesson plans, task sheets, and discussion prompts** aligned with both language and sustainability outcomes.
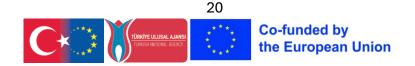
Moreover, many upper-secondary schools adopt **CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning)**, in which science-related subjects are taught in English. In such cases, environmental topics such as **ecosystems, carbon cycles, pollution metrics, and climate models** are explored using English-medium content, reinforcing both subject knowledge and eco-linguistic competence. CLIL teachers often collaborate with ELT teachers to ensure **terminological alignment** and transfer of eco-vocabulary across subject boundaries.

While these strengths are notable, the Lithuanian report also identifies areas for improvement:

- In some cases, **environmental content is isolated to a single unit**, with limited progression or revisiting across the curriculum.
- **Productive oral activities** (e.g., debates, role plays, problem-solving) are not always fully developed or scaffolded, despite student engagement potential.
- Textbooks sometimes prioritize **standardized exam preparation**, which may displace time for richer ecological discussions or projects.
- Although CLIL provides deep environmental integration, **not all schools implement it**, and teachers without CLIL training may hesitate to tackle scientific themes in English.

Nevertheless, Lithuania stands out for its **pedagogical openness**, strong institutional support for environmental education, and a culture of **material adaptation and teacher agency**. National initiatives such as *Mokykla 2030* explicitly promote the integration of **sustainability, digital innovation, and civic education**, providing digital libraries and MOOC-style teacher training. These systemic supports greatly enhance the **practical implementation of environmental themes** within ELT classes.

In conclusion, Lithuanian upper-secondary ELT materials demonstrate **robust and structured inclusion of ecological content**, both in commercial textbooks and national digital resources. With interdisciplinary coordination, strong teacher autonomy, and policy-aligned priorities, Lithuania offers a compelling model for embedding **eco-consciousness into foreign language**

learning. The EcoLingua project can further support this momentum by offering structured digital content, task-based activities, and cross-national sharing of best practices that empower teachers to move beyond isolated vocabulary instruction toward **deep ecological engagement through English**.

3.4 Turkey

In Turkey, the selection and approval of English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks for high school is centralized. All state schools are required to use **textbooks approved by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE)**, based on the 2018 ELT curriculum aligned with CEFR levels, primarily targeting **B1 to B2** by the end of Grade 12. The most widely used books include *Uplift Grade 9*, *English Grade 9 Coursebook*, and other series developed under the MoNE textbook commission. While the curriculum emphasizes communicative competence, task-based learning, and real-life interaction, the integration of **environmental and climate-related content** in these materials remains **limited, sporadic, and underdeveloped**.

A review of the two main Grade 9 books, *Uplift Grade 9* and *English Grade 9 Coursebook*, shows that **Theme 4: Human in Nature** is the most prominent location for environmental content. Subsections such as *"Habit is Second Nature"*, *"Nature Calls You"*, and *"Take Care of Nature"* contain lexical fields such as *forest, mountain, lake, thunderstorm*, and *natural disaster*. However, these are primarily **used to teach basic vocabulary, descriptive language, or grammatical functions** (e.g., talking about abilities or routines) rather than to promote ecological awareness or critical engagement with climate issues.

In Grade 12, *Theme 8: Alternative Energy* provides the only unit with a relatively focused approach to sustainability. Students are introduced to energy types such as *solar, wind, hydro, geothermal, biofuel*, and the unit includes vocabulary such as *environmental problem*, *carbon footprint*, *air pollution*, and *petrol-free vehicles*. The communicative objectives for this unit— "describing problems," "making complaints," and "offering solutions"—offer potential entry points for critical ecological discussions. However, these opportunities are **not consistently capitalized on**, and often remain at the level of isolated sentence construction or closed reading comprehension questions.

Across all grade levels, the textbooks exhibit the following **characteristics and limitations** in addressing environmental issues:
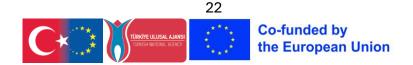
- **Environmental vocabulary** is presented mostly **out of context**, often without scaffolding toward productive tasks (e.g., writing or speaking about sustainability).
- There is a **lack of integration** of ecological themes across multiple units or as a recurring topic throughout the year.
- Listening sections and dialogues are typically oriented toward general topics (e.g., travel, daily life) and rarely incorporate climate or sustainability themes.
- **No interdisciplinary or CLIL-inspired materials** are provided, and **no textbook units** link English instruction to global citizenship, SDGs, or environmental justice.

Notably, grammar and writing sections **miss pedagogical opportunities** to link structures (e.g., conditionals, modals, passives) with real-world climate scenarios. For example:

- Instead of using *"If we don't recycle, the planet will suffer"* as a grammar context, conditionals are often modeled with unrelated examples like *"If it rains, we will stay home."*
- Modals of necessity (*must*, *should*, *have to*) are practiced in the context of classroom rules or health, rather than sustainability behavior.

In terms of **supplementary materials**, schools and teachers have minimal access to structured digital content on environmental themes within the MoNE system. Although the national EBA (Education Informatics Network) platform includes general resources for science and geography, there is no dedicated ELT module or curated content bank for climate-related English instruction. As a result, teachers who wish to incorporate sustainability must **individually curate or create resources**, often from external sources or international platforms.

The national report underscores that **the current ELT materials do not reflect the increasing urgency of integrating sustainability into education**, as emphasized by MoNE's broader strategic documents (e.g., the 2023 Education Vision, the Türkiye Yüzyılı model). There is a

significant **disconnect between the Ministry's policy ambitions and the actual pedagogical tools provided** for ELT teachers.

Nonetheless, the **existing communicative framework and task-based structure** of the textbooks offer a foundation upon which sustainability content could be meaningfully embedded. For instance, existing speaking tasks could be adapted to simulate:

- Group discussions on reducing waste at school;
- Mini-debates on banning plastic bags;
- Letter writing to environmental NGOs.

In conclusion, while Turkey's high school ELT textbooks include **marginal environmental content**, particularly in Grade 12, they fall short of providing a **systematic, meaningful, or pedagogically rich engagement** with sustainability topics. The integration of ecology is currently **tokenistic rather than transformative**, and does not meet the standards of environmental literacy promoted by EU and global education policy frameworks. The EcoLingua project presents a timely opportunity to bridge this gap by developing supplementary digital tasks, teacher guides, and classroom materials that align with both CEFR goals and environmental education priorities. In doing so, Turkey's ELT classrooms can evolve from language training spaces into **platforms for ecological reflection and action**.

4. Comparative Thematic Analysis

A comparative analysis of high school ELT curricula and materials across Spain, Italy, Lithuania, and Turkey reveals **significant variation in the depth, frequency, and pedagogical integration** of environmental themes. While all four countries include references to ecology, climate change, or sustainability at some level—either through curriculum objectives, textbook content, or broader educational policies—the nature of this integration ranges from **superficial vocabulary exposure** to **systematically embedded, interdisciplinary learning models**.

One of the key points of divergence is the **breadth and recurrence of environmental themes** across grade levels. **Lithuania and Italy** demonstrate more **structurally embedded**

approaches, often integrating environmental content not only into ELT lessons but also across subjects via CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) and civic education mandates. In contrast, **Turkey and Spain** tend to present environmental topics in **isolated units**, typically one per textbook, with limited vertical progression or thematic coherence throughout the academic year.
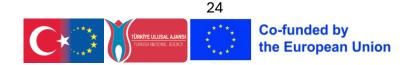
In terms of **thematic coverage**, the most frequently recurring topics across all four countries include:

- **Climate change and global warming**
- **Pollution (especially plastic and air pollution)**
- **Renewable vs. non-renewable energy**
- **Conservation and biodiversity**
- **Urban sustainability and responsible consumption**

However, more nuanced or interdisciplinary environmental themes such as **climate justice, circular economy, indigenous ecological knowledge, or sustainable tourism** appear **sporadically**—primarily in Italian and Lithuanian materials—while being virtually absent in Turkish and Spanish high school ELT content.

A significant factor influencing this divergence is the **pedagogical approach to language teaching**:

- In **Italy and Lithuania**, project-based learning, critical thinking tasks, and CLIL modules allow students to explore environmental issues in **depth and across skills** (e.g., writing essays, participating in debates, designing eco-campaigns).
- In **Spain**, while authentic texts are present in some textbooks, the lack of systematic follow-up activities (e.g., discussions, critical writing) often limits students' engagement with environmental themes to **receptive tasks only**.
- In **Turkey**, despite a communicative curriculum model, ecological content is largely confined to **surface-level vocabulary** and basic grammar exercises, with minimal opportunities for deeper reflection, synthesis, or real-world language use.

With respect to **productive language tasks**, **Lithuania and Italy** outperform the other partners by embedding environmental themes into speaking activities (e.g., role plays, debates), formal and informal writing (e.g., reports, letters, argumentative essays), and collaborative tasks (e.g., research posters, eco-club outputs). **Spain** includes some strong reading passages and visual stimuli but tends to underutilize them for communicative output. **Turkey**, while structurally aligned with task-based and project-based learning principles, fails to operationalize those structures toward ecological literacy without supplemental teacher input.

From a **textbook development perspective**, Lithuania makes use of **digitally enhanced national platforms** (e.g., Mokykla 2030), and Italy benefits from external resources such as *Scuola2030* and *Get Up and Goals!*. These systems provide teachers with **ready-made materials, training, and cross-curricular support**. Conversely, Spain and Turkey lack **centralized digital or pedagogical support systems** specifically aimed at integrating environmental themes into ELT. This leads to **greater dependency on teacher initiative**, resulting in fragmented practices and missed opportunities for coherence.

Another point of comparison is the **integration of grammar and environmental content**. Italy and Lithuania show examples of how modal verbs, passives, and conditionals can be embedded in environmental contexts (e.g., "We must protect biodiversity"; "If we don't act now…"), whereas in Turkey and Spain, grammar is mostly taught using **generic or unrelated themes**, representing a **pedagogical disconnect** between linguistic structures and thematic relevance.

Finally, in terms of **curricular alignment with sustainability education policy**, Italy and Lithuania again stand out. Both countries' national curricula and education strategies explicitly link ELT and sustainability education through transversal civic competencies and CLIL pathways. In Spain, environmental education is clearly mandated but **its application in ELT is less systematic**. In Turkey, although national education policy promotes global citizenship and 21st-century skills, there is **no direct integration of environmental priorities into the ELT curriculum or textbook design**.

In summary:

Country	Integration Depth	Thematic Recurrence	Task Richness	Institutional Support	Teacher Dependence
Italy	High	Medium-High	High	Strong (CLIL, Civic Ed)	Medium
Lithuania	High	High	High	Strong (Mokykla 2030)	Medium
Spain	Medium	Low	Medium-Low	Limited	High
Turkey	Low	Low	Low	Very limited	Very high

This comparative thematic analysis highlights that while all countries recognize the relevance of environmental education, the **extent to which ELT classrooms serve as spaces for ecological literacy varies widely**. Italy and Lithuania demonstrate how **curricular policy, textbook content, and teacher empowerment** can coalesce into impactful pedagogy. In contrast, Spain and Turkey illustrate the limitations of **fragmented textbook content and insufficient systemic support**. For the EcoLingua project, these findings reinforce the need to design **digital, adaptable, and linguistically rich environmental ELT materials**, especially for contexts where integration is currently underdeveloped.

5. Conclusions

The comparative analysis of high school English Language Teaching (ELT) curricula and materials in Spain, Italy, Lithuania, and Turkey within the framework of the EcoLingua project reveals both promising developments and critical gaps in the integration of environmental themes into upper-secondary language education. While all four countries formally recognize the significance of sustainability in their broader educational policies, the degree to which this priority is **systematically reflected in ELT practice** varies considerably, shaped by institutional structures, textbook ecosystems, and pedagogical traditions.

A key conclusion is that **curriculum design alone is not sufficient** to ensure meaningful environmental engagement in language classrooms. In countries such as **Italy and Lithuania**, where environmental education is supported by **transversal civic education mandates, CLIL-based implementation models, and national platforms for interdisciplinary learning**, ELT classrooms offer richer, more frequent, and more meaningful engagement with ecological issues. In these contexts, English is not merely a vehicle for language instruction but also a tool for **critical environmental inquiry, cross-cultural dialogue, and civic participation**.

In contrast, in **Spain and Turkey**, the environmental content embedded in high school ELT textbooks tends to be **episodic, compartmentalized, and linguistically superficial**. While isolated units do reference sustainability topics, these are often limited to lexical exposure or passive reading comprehension tasks, with little opportunity for dialogic interaction, productive language use, or student-driven exploration. Furthermore, the **lack of national-level ELT-specific sustainability resources** and **insufficient teacher training** exacerbate the disconnect between curricular aims and classroom realities.

Across all four countries, environmental topics are most commonly addressed through themes such as **climate change, renewable energy, pollution, and urban sustainability**, with varying levels of complexity and pedagogical richness. However, critical dimensions such as **climate justice, environmental ethics, indigenous ecological knowledge, or global policy debates** remain underexplored, especially in mainstream ELT materials. This narrow thematic framing limits students' ability to develop a **holistic understanding of sustainability as a linguistic, cultural, and ethical domain**.

Another shared finding concerns the **imbalance between receptive and productive language tasks**. While environmental topics are often present in reading passages or vocabulary lists, they are less frequently integrated into **writing, speaking, or project-based tasks**. Even in countries with well-developed curriculum policies, the absence of structured tasks—such as debates, simulations, collaborative research, or reflective writing—hampers the development of eco-linguistic competence. Moreover, grammar instruction remains largely

decontextualized, with missed opportunities to use linguistic structures to articulate environmental positions, argue for change, or hypothesize about future scenarios.
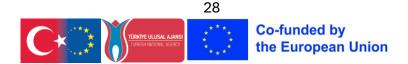
A further concern lies in **equity and teacher autonomy**. In systems where integration depends on individual teacher initiative—most notably in Turkey and, to a lesser extent, Spain—learners' exposure to sustainability in ELT becomes uneven and dependent on context. Teachers may lack the **pedagogical tools, institutional support, or content-specific training** to confidently integrate climate-related topics into their English lessons, particularly when standardized exams or textbook constraints dominate their instructional time.

Nonetheless, the comparative evidence also reveals fertile ground for pedagogical innovation. All four countries possess **frameworks, materials, and policy foundations** that could be further activated and aligned with EcoLingua's mission. The communicative, task-based design of existing curricula offers a solid platform upon which environmental content could be layered, provided that teachers are equipped with **digitally enhanced, curriculum-aligned, and skill-integrated materials**.

In conclusion, while the current state of environmental integration in high school ELT across partner countries reflects **emerging awareness and isolated practices**, it falls short of providing a **comprehensive, cohesive, and transformative model of sustainability education through language learning**. The findings of this report underscore the need for targeted action at multiple levels: curriculum enrichment, textbook development, teacher training, and digital resource creation. By addressing these areas through collaborative efforts, the EcoLingua project can significantly contribute to **redefining ELT as a site of ecological consciousness, intercultural sensitivity, and active citizenship**.

6. Recommendations

Based on the comparative findings of this report, a series of strategic and pedagogical recommendations are proposed to enhance the integration of environmental and climate-related themes into high school English Language Teaching (ELT). These recommendations target various stakeholders including curriculum developers, textbook authors, teacher educators, and

policy makers, with the aim of aligning ELT practices more closely with the goals of sustainability education and the priorities of the EcoLingua project.

6.1. Cross-Country Recommendations

1. **Develop eco-themed ELT modules aligned with CEFR and SDG 4.7**
   There is an urgent need for dedicated teaching units, worksheets, and digital modules that integrate sustainability themes with communicative language skills (speaking, writing, listening, and reading), grammar structures, and intercultural objectives. These materials should be **CEFR-aligned**, **topic-flexible**, and **available as open-access resources**.

2. **Train teachers in eco-pedagogies for language classrooms**
   National teacher training and in-service professional development programs should include components on **climate literacy**, **eco-linguistic task design**, and **interdisciplinary project facilitation**. Teachers should be equipped with both the **content knowledge** and the **pedagogical strategies** necessary to confidently embed environmental topics into ELT.

3. **Embed environmental scenarios into grammar, writing, and speaking tasks**
   Grammar teaching should move beyond abstract sentence drills and incorporate environmental content (e.g., "If we don't reduce emissions...", "Plastic is recycled..."). Similarly, writing and speaking tasks should regularly involve real-world contexts such as climate debates, green innovations, or ecological challenges.

4. **Foster cross-curricular and interdisciplinary collaborations**
   Where possible, ELT departments should collaborate with science, geography, and citizenship education teachers to co-design interdisciplinary projects in English. Schools should be encouraged to apply **CLIL** or project-based learning models to engage students in meaningful, cross-subject eco-dialogue.

5. **Establish national or regional digital repositories for eco-ELT content**
   Ministries and educational agencies should develop and maintain digital hubs where teachers can access, adapt, and contribute ELT materials on sustainability. These

platforms could also feature **student-created content**, assessment tools, and community-led initiatives.

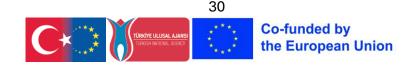## 6.2. Country-Specific Recommendations

Spain

- Encourage regional education authorities and textbook publishers to include **ecological themes more systematically** across multiple units, not just in isolated modules.
- Expand the use of existing civic education mandates to promote **environmental dialogue in ELT**.
- Provide teacher incentives and training for integrating sustainability into oral and written production tasks.

Italy

- Strengthen the **link between CLIL and mainstream ELT**, ensuring that sustainability is addressed not only in content-subjects but also in language classes.
- Support the expansion of **Scuola2030-type initiatives** by integrating ELT-specific resources and activities.
- Encourage textbook developers to build **coherent ecological narratives** across coursebooks, revisiting sustainability themes progressively through levels.

Lithuania

- Consolidate best practices from CLIL and project-based eco-ELT by creating **scaffolded thematic pathways** across Grades 11–12.
- Formalize the connection between national curriculum outcomes and eco-ELT practices through **assessment rubrics** and teacher guidelines.
- Promote peer-led teacher collaboration networks focused on **developing green task banks and speaking prompts**.

Turkey

- Urgently revise the high school ELT textbooks to move beyond **tokenistic coverage of environmental vocabulary** and integrate **sustainability across all language skills**.
- Establish **pilot schools or model classrooms** under the EcoLingua project to test eco-ELT resources and share scalable practices.
- Invest in **professional development programs** and **teacher communities of practice** focused on climate education within ELT, especially in under-resourced regions.

6.3. EcoLingua Project-Oriented Recommendations

- Use the findings of this report to **inform the design of digital teaching tools and materials** in the next work packages (WP3 and WP4), ensuring that they reflect the specific needs and gaps identified in each partner country.
- Develop a **teacher toolkit** that includes eco-ELT lesson templates, vocabulary glossaries, task instructions, and assessment criteria for evaluating language learning in environmentally themed contexts.
- Promote **international sharing of good practices** via webinars, mobility events, and collaborative teacher blogs to connect educators working at the intersection of ELT and sustainability.
- Consider producing a **policy brief** based on this report for national education authorities, highlighting how ELT can contribute to national sustainability goals and curriculum reform initiatives.