

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

8 MAY 1945 UNIVERSITY / GUELMA

قالمة/1945 ماي 8 جامعة

FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES

كلية الآداب و اللغات

DEPARTMENT OF LETTERS & ENGLISH LANGUAGE

قسم الآداب و اللغة الإنجليزية



Option: LINGUISTICS

The Role of English as a Foreign Language in Promoting Global Awareness of Sustainable Development Goals:

A sociolinguistic Analysis of EFL Learners at the University of 08 Mai 1945-Guelma

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language and Culture

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June 2025

Dedication I

It is a tender challenge to convey, through mere words, the depth of gratitude that fills my heart. This work is not simply an academic endeavour; it is the embodiment of a journey shaped by silent struggles, steadfast hope, resilience born in quiet moments, and above all, the enduring love of those who have walked beside me.

First and foremost,

*All praise and gratitude are due to **Allah**.*

To my beloved mother

My guiding star, your boundless love and tireless devotion have been my shelter and my strength. In your eyes, I have found courage; in your embrace, an endless well of peace.

To my late father

May your soul rest in peace. Your absence echoes through every beat of this accomplishment, yet your spirit lives within me, a quiet flame of strength and inspiration. This is for you, and for all the dreams we shared.

*To my precious sisters, **Selma** and **Sara***

Your love has soothed my heart when weary and lifted my spirit when it faltered. You are, and will always be, among my greatest blessings.

*To my brothers, **Nabil** and **Raouf***

Your unwavering belief in me has been a pillar of strength. I carry your faith and encouragement with me, always.

*To **Amel** and **Chaima***

My dear sisters-in-law, thank you for the warmth of your presence and the gentle grace with which you have stood beside me. Your kindness has enriched my life in countless ways.

*To **Amjed Zayn***

The youngest and brightest light of our family, your laughter, your joy, your boundless energy; these are treasures beyond measure. You are the sunshine of our days and the promise of tomorrow.

*To my cherished research partner, **Nehla***

Your presence on this path has been a gift. Thank you for every shared moment, your patience, your laughter, and your unwavering support. Together, we were stronger.

*To my dear friends **Douaa, Hadil, and Rawnek***

Through every trial and triumph, your friendship has been a refuge, a joy, a cherished thread woven into the fabric of this journey.

*To my best friend, **Fedia***

Your steadfast love, your laughter, and your boundless heart have carried me through storm and sun. You are one of the rarest and dearest gifts life has offered me.

*To my childhood friends, **Hadil, Khadija, and Mejda***

Woven into the earliest chapters of my life, your friendship is a timeless treasure. Thank you for the countless moments that continue to shine in my memory.

*to **Sawsen Bechkoura***

Special and heartfelt thanks to you. Your generosity, unwavering support, and kindness have been a guiding light on this path. I will forever hold your help close to my heart.

*To **Madame Khella Leila***

My training teacher, your courage, kindness, and sincere love have inspired me deeply. I am truly grateful to have learned under your care.

*And to **myself, my Amal***

For each step bravely taken, each tear quietly shed, every doubt faced and conquered, each dawn greeted with renewed resolve, thank you. I am proud of the strength it took to stand here today.

*And to you, **dear reader***

Thank you for holding this work in your hands and for being part of its story.

*To all those **kind souls***

Who stood beside me, in moments both bright and shadowed, thank you. Your presence has been a balm and a blessing.

From the deepest reaches of my heart, thank you.

AMAL

Dedication II

All praise and thanks be to You:

Allah Almighty, the one who guided my every step and carried my heart through it all.

To the **soul** that endured 23 seasons of becoming, I honor your quiet strength.

To the love of my life, “**my father**”, whose absence is a presence, and whose light still walks beside me. You were the one who truly believed in me, who wanted nothing more than to see me succeed. I wish you were here. Maybe... in another life.

To my **mother**, the heart of our home. Your love may not always have been easy to see, but I have always felt it strong, steady, and real.

To my sisters, **Khadija, Souhaila, Lina, and Chaima**. You are my stars in the darkest nights. Each one of you means something deeply special to me, and I am grateful for the love you’ve given.

To **Fares, Mouhamed, and Larbi**, not brothers by law, but brothers by bond.

To **my friends, Darine, Oumaima, Hadile, Douaa, Manel, Manar, and Firdaws**. The greatest treasure I have found throughout my university journey. I cannot imagine how bleak this chapter would have been without you. I will never forget the sound of our laughter, nor the tears we shared along the way.

To **Arwa**, the purest soul who walked beside me since the very beginning. Through every rise life offers and every turn time takes, you remain my constant, and my always.

To **Sawsen Bechkoura & Manel Friane**, though we have never met in person, I feel compelled to acknowledge your influence on my journey. Your words and your works reached me across distance and time. Thank you for being a quiet light in a moment I didn’t know I needed one.

To *Amel*, my teammate in one of the most defining journeys of our academic path. This achievement is ours, and I'm grateful we shared every step of it together. I couldn't have asked for a better person to walk beside me on this journey. Thank you, truly.

To *those* who defended me in rooms I wasn't in.

"I love you".

NEHLA

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, we thank **Allah** the Almighty for granting us the patience, strength, and determination to complete this academic journey. His endless mercy and guidance sustained us through every challenge.

We are deeply grateful to our supervisor, **Mrs. Fatima ABDAOUI**, whose constant encouragement, valuable advice, and insightful guidance have been a source of inspiration throughout this work. Her support, patience, and professionalism have taught us lessons beyond the academic. It has been a true privilege to work under her supervision.

We would also like to sincerely thank the members of the jury, “**Mrs. Amina KRIBES**” & “**Mrs. Sabrina LASSOUED**”, for dedicating their time to review and evaluate our thesis.

To them all, we extend our warmest gratitude and deepest respect.

Abstract

This study examines the role of learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in promoting students' global awareness of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) at the University of 8 Mai 1945–Guelma, Algeria. It focuses on some sociolinguistic factors such as age, gender, and academic level to analyze their influence on students' perceptions of and engagement with sustainability themes. Employing a comparative descriptive method, the research targets a sample of 80 students, comprising 40 first-year and 40 second-year master's students from the Department of Letters and English Language. Data were gathered through a 17-item questionnaire containing both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The findings reveal that exposure to EFL content, including classroom discussions and global topics, significantly contributes to enhancing learners' awareness of the SDGs. Notably, senior students demonstrated a higher level of awareness and more critical engagement with sustainability issues compared to freshmen, likely due to their advanced academic level and longer exposure to EFL instruction. Furthermore, the study observed that female students were generally more responsive to sustainability themes, while academic level emerged as a strong predictor of both awareness and engagement. The results underscored the potential of EFL instruction to support the development of global citizenship by equipping students with linguistic skills as well as critical awareness necessary for addressing contemporary global challenges. Furthermore, the study concluded by recommending the integration of SDG-related content into EFL curricula to enrich both language proficiency and social consciousness.

Keywords

Sustainable Development Goals, learning English as a Foreign Language, global awareness, EFL learners, global citizenship, University of 8 Mai 1945-Guelma.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AI: Artificial Intelligence

BA: Bachelor

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

ESD: Education for Sustainable Development

HEI: Higher Education Institution

MDGs: Millennium Development Goals

SDC: Sustainable Development Competency

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals

SET: Social Exchange Theory

SHEI: Sustainable Higher Education Institution

UN: United Nations

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

WCED: World Commission on Environment and Development

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General Introduction

Globalization plays a critical role in shaping modern society. It offers various challenges, including barriers to inclusivity, equality and effective communication. This could raise the complexity and difficulty of achieving the sustainable development goals (SDGs). In 2015, the United States established the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which serves as a blueprint to end poverty in all its forms and achieve global peace. It includes 17 interconnected goals with 169 inseparable targets that require collective efforts to achieve global progress and foster “win-win” cooperation that promises significant benefits for all nations and regions (United Nations, 2015). Achieving these ambitious goals requires both governmental action and the empowerment of individuals, the latter of which can be realized through education, including the critical role of English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

In the Modern Era, English has become a global language since it has significant global presence in various domains, such as trade, diplomacy, science, technology, media, and education. As education systems around the world recognize the importance of English, they implement EFL programs to meet the growing demand for English proficiency. According to De Houwer and Wilton (2011), European language policies have encouraged primary schools to introduce English early, aiming to enhance students' proficiency and pronunciation (p. 148). In this respect, EFL programs serve as a bridge that enables learners in non-English-speaking countries to gain the English language skills needed for addressing challenges, including the SDGs.

There is a significant connection between EFL and the SDGs. Many studies have shown that implementing SDGs in the EFL classroom can impact the learners in a positive way (Astawa et al., 2024, p. 9). From this perspective, EFL can play a significant role in helping learners become more aware of the SDGs. EFL education not only gives students the chance to explore important global issues but also equips them with the language skills they need to

engage in meaningful conversations about sustainability and development (Astawa et al. 2024). Therefore, this research aims to show how EFL education can effectively nurture a deeper understanding of the SDGs among students at the University of 08 May 1945-Guelma. More precisely, it conducts a comparative study between two academic levels: first-year LMD students and Master 2 students. By examining the differences in SDG awareness across these groups, the study seeks to determine how EFL instruction at different stages of higher education can enhance students' global awareness and empower them to actively engage with sustainability-related issues.

1. Statement of The Problem

Despite the growing focus on incorporating SDGs into education, there is a lack of empirical evidence regarding the specific role of EFL in raising global awareness of these goals among EFL learners, particularly in the Algerian context. Consequently, further research is needed to address this gap. The situation of EFL students at the English department in Guelma is not an exception. There is a noticeable lack of awareness about SDGs among EFL learners, which may be attributed to sociolinguistic factors such as language use and learner characteristics (e.g., age, gender, and academic level) that shape their engagement with global issues. This study aims to examine the perceptions, knowledge, and attitudes of EFL students at the University of Guelma toward SDGs, as well as how their experiences in EFL courses might contribute to enhancing their understanding of global sustainability issues.

2. Aims of the study and research question

Students' awareness of the SDGs is influenced by several factors, including sociolinguistic aspects such as age, gender, and level of education. Based on this, the present research aims to examine how EFL education can enhance learners' awareness of SDGs at the University of 08 Mai 1945-Guelma. Specifically, it seeks to compare the level of SDG awareness between freshmen and senior students to explore whether and how awareness improves after several semesters of university study. In doing so, the study also investigates the extent to which EFL

education contributes to enhancing students' global awareness of the SDGs. The study addresses the following research question:

To what extent does EFL education enhance global awareness of SDGs among students at the University of Guelma?

By exploring this question, the research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between EFL education and awareness of sustainability among learners.

3. Research Methodology Design

3.1. General Method

The present study adopts a quantitative comparative descriptive method to examine the role of learning EFL in enhancing students' global awareness of the SDGs. This approach was selected to allow for the measurement and comparison of responses across first-year students and second-year master students, as well as the exploration of relevant sociolinguistic factors. A questionnaire was used as the main data collection tool, enabling the researchers to gather structured responses from a representative sample. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify group similarities, differences, and assess the influence of age, gender, and academic level on students' perceptions of sustainability and the role of EFL education.

3.2. population of the Study

The sample of the current study includes both male and female students from different levels at the department of English at the University of 08 Mai 1945-Guelma. It consists of eighty (80) students, equally divided between forty (40) first-year students and forty (40) master two students. This inclusive approach allows for a diverse representation of perspectives and experiences regarding the role of learning EFL in promoting the global awareness of SDGs.

3.3. Tools of Data Collection

To conduct the present research, a semi-structured questionnaire was used as the main and most appropriate tool for data collection. It was administered to both first-year and master two students to gather their insights and perceptions. The questionnaire consisted of 18 items, combining both closed-ended and open-ended questions. This format allowed students to choose from predefined options while also offering the opportunity to provide qualitative responses that reflect their experiences and opinions.

3.4. Data Analysis

To reach the intended objectives, a descriptive study was provided to analyse the collected data. Learners' responses and choices derived from the questionnaire, were analyzed using quantitative.

To achieve the objectives of this study, a comparative descriptive analysis was employed to examine the collected data. The questionnaire responses were analyzed using quantitative methods, with a focus on identifying similarities and differences between the two participant groups : first-year students and second-year master students. The analysis aimed to explore the extent to which learners from each group demonstrated awareness of the SDGs and perceived the role of EFL in promoting global awareness. Furthermore, the data were examined in relation to selected sociolinguistic factors, including age, gender, and academic level, to assess their influence on students' engagement with sustainability-related themes. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to present the findings, and tables and graphs were included to support interpretation and enable meaningful comparisons across groups.

4. Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation is structured into two main parts: a theoretical part and a practical part. It begins with a General Introduction, which provides a review of the relevant literature, outlines

the statement of the problem, presents the aim of the study and research questions, explains the research methodology design, and describes the participants, tools of data collection, data analysis procedures, and the overall structure of the work. The first part consists of two theoretical chapters and the second part entirely focused on the practical chapter of the study. The first chapter is concerned with the dependent variable, which is the global awareness of SDGs. This chapter includes conceptual definitions, theoretical foundations, and contextual factors related to SDG awareness. The second chapter tackles the independent variable, EFL. It presents a background of the subject incorporating definitions, conceptual grounding, pedagogical theories, and sociocultural influences related to EFL education. Furthermore, the third chapter emphasizes the practical part of the research, where the data collected from EFL learners at the University of 08 Mai 1945-Guelma through a questionnaire is analyzed and interpreted. Additionally, this chapter further includes a section that represents recommendations based on the findings and examines the limitations of the study. The dissertation concludes with a General Conclusion, which summarizes the main findings and reflects on the overall contribution of the study.

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Introduction

Throughout history, the world has witnessed several challenges that have made life more difficult and miserable. People across the world continue to suffer from poverty, hunger, inadequate healthcare, and many other pressing global issues. Addressing these challenges requires collaborative efforts from governments, organizations, and individuals to develop sustainable solutions. In this context, the SDGs emerged with the hope of creating a better world, one where all individuals have equal opportunities and can enjoy a life of peace and prosperity. In this regard, this chapter offers a comprehensive overview of the SDGs. It starts with foundational concepts, progressing toward a more specific understanding of the goals. The chapter further explores the importance of awareness in sustainable development and how it influences behaviour. In addition, it considers various factors that impact global awareness of the SDGs, including socio-linguistic aspects. Finally, it highlights the role of education and language in promoting SDG awareness and supporting global sustainability efforts.

1.1. Globalization and Sustainable Development

1.1.1 Globalization

Globalization refers to the increasing interconnectedness of the world due to economic and technological changes, where developments in one region can significantly impact people and communities elsewhere. This process strengthens and accelerates global connections across various aspects of life, including culture, crime, finance, and spirituality. Globalization can be understood through several key dimensions: the stretching of socio-political and economic activities beyond national borders, the regularization of cross-border interactions, the acceleration of global exchanges due to technological advancements, and the deep interconnection between local and global events (Held et al., 1999, as cited in Blewitt, 2008). “The logic of globalization is essentially the logic of capitalism; That is, the preservation and expansion of capital reproduction are rooted, and therefore the economy is at the forefront of

globalization”(Norouzi & Ataei, 2021, p. 66). Gasimli et al., (2022) emphasize that globalization influences sustainable development by reshaping economic structures and contributing to income growth. As a result, higher income levels lead to increased public and private investments in environmental sustainability (p. 11).

1.1.2. Sustainable Development

The concept of sustainable development was firstly defined in the Brundtland Commission as development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development [WCED], 1987, p. 16). This definition highlights the balance between present and future needs, emphasizing intergenerational equity. It suggests that development should not be driven only by short-term gains but must also consider long-term environmental, social, and economic impacts, which are central to the idea of sustainable development. The WCED initiated a major study in 1983 to establish sustainable development as a fundamental concept and approach in modern times. This is due to its beneficial impact on humanity. Along with promoting social justice and a certain level of economic equality within and among nations, sustainable development strives to protect and sustain the planet’s natural ecosystem (Blewitt, 2008).

Sustainable development is essentially a transformation process whereby resource exploitation, investment direction, technological development direction, and institutional change all work together harmoniously to improve the ability to meet human needs and aspirations both now and in the future (WCED, 1987, p. 43). Keeble (1988) explains that sustainable development includes two main ideas. The first is that human needs, particularly those of the world's poor, can be met through a fairer distribution of opportunities and resources. The second is that economic growth and resource use are limited by the environment's ability to support both present and future demands (p. 5).

A widely used definition of sustainability uses three interrelated “pillars”. Figure (1.1) includes economic, social, and environmental (or ecological) considerations or objectives (Purvis et al., 2019). The researchers state that the ‘three-pillar’ framework has been attributed to the Brundtland Report, Agenda 21, and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (p. 5). Economic sustainability involves responsible management of natural and human resources to ensure long-term economic stability and intergenerational equity (Moldan et al., 2012). Black (2004, as cited in Moldan et al, p.5) explains that a key aspect of social sustainability is ensuring that social values, identities, relationships, and institutions are preserved and maintained for future generations.

Sutton (2004) highlights that environmental sustainability refers to preserving and upholding the essential qualities of the natural environment over time. The three-sector division has the effect of promoting a technical-fix strategy to address problems related to sustainable development (Giddings et al., 2002, p. 3).

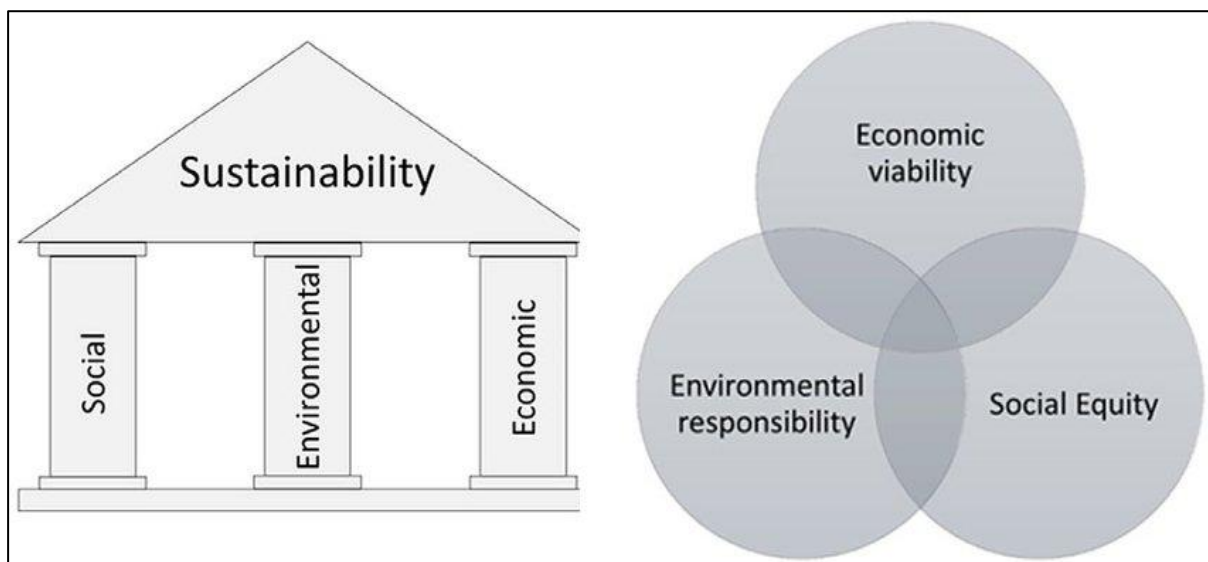


Figure 1. 1: The Three Pillars of Sustainability (Loach et al., 2016, p. 5).

1.2. Understanding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The concept of SDGs has rapidly spread due to the increasing global need for sustainable development (Sachs, 2012). Today, these objectives represent the global development agenda (Jayasooria & Yi, 2023). “The 2030 SDG Agenda has five areas of critical importance which can be referred to as the five Ps. These are people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships” (Jayasooria, 2016, p. 20). It was created and published in 2015 by the United Nations. It includes 17 interconnected goals with 169 inseparable targets that require collective efforts to achieve global progress (United Nations, 2015b, p. 9). The three pillars of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental are the main focus of these objectives (Munar, 2022, p. 4). By making a significant contribution to the global push for sustainable development, they drive a fundamental transformation in both economies and communities toward sustainability (Sain et al., 2024).

1.2.1. Historical background: From MDGs to SDGs

A simple definition of the Millenium Development Goals is that they embody the efforts of all nations involved in the Millennium Summit, both in serving their citizens and in collaborating with other governments (Diouf, 2019, p. 17). This global initiative has led to the most successful poverty reduction movement in history (United Nations, 2015b, p. 3). According to Sach (2012), these goals become a way to measure global progress in reducing poverty over 15 years, from 2000 to 2015. They focus on specific objectives including eliminating severe poverty and food insecurity, ensuring access to primary education, advancing women's rights by fostering gender equality, decreasing children's death rate, supporting women's health, addressing illnesses, encouraging ecological sustainability, and building strong global collaborations (United Nations, 2015b).

To build on this success, global leaders, guided by the United Nation, have proposed a new set of SDGs to continue these efforts beyond 2015 (Evans and Steven, 2012). In this

context, the SDGs originate from and build upon the MDGs. What makes the SDGs different from the MDGs is that they play a critical role at the universal level, rather than being limited to developing countries or specific regions (Diouf, 2019, pp. 18- 19). The researcher also ensures that in order to effectively address the concerns of the future global community, these global objectives are proposed as a replacement for the MDGs (p. 21). In addition, the SDGs (With 169 objectives and 231 distinct indicators) represent a more extensive agenda compared to the MDGs which involve only 8 goals (Jayasooria & Yi, 2023, p. 311).

1.2.2. Overview of the 17 SDGs and their interconnections



Figure 1. 2: The United Nations SDGs (UNESCO, 2023)

Figure 1.2 is adapted from UNESCO (2023), which presents the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a collective vision for a better future. One that places equal weight on human prosperity, global peace, and environmental integrity. Adopted in 2015 by all UN

Member states, the Agenda is founded on 17 SDGs that call for urgent, coordinated action across all nations. These goals are not merely policy targets, they represent a shared commitment to dignity, equity, and resilience for current and future generations. The SDGs form a universal roadmap shaped by inclusive dialogue and aimed at uniting efforts for a more just and sustainable world. While the figure draws primarily on UNESCO's articulation of this vision, complementary frameworks such as the Global Reporting Initiative (2021) help to operationalize and monitor its implementation.

Goal 1: It focuses on eradicating extreme poverty, reducing poverty, ensuring social protection, promoting economic access, and enhancing resilience.

Goal 2: It emphasizes ending hunger, eliminating malnutrition, increasing agricultural productivity, ensuring sustainable food production, and preserving genetic diversity in agriculture.

Goal 3: It concentrates on reducing the death rate, ending epidemics, improving healthcare access, and addressing health risks (p. 2).

Goal 4: Quality Education focuses on inclusive education, early childhood development, higher education access, skill enhancement, gender equality, literacy, and sustainable development learning (p. 2).

Goal 5: The core aim is to end discrimination, prevent violence, eliminate harmful practices, value care work, promote leadership, and ensure reproductive rights (p. 2).

Goal 6: The Goal focuses on ensuring safe water access, sanitation, pollution reduction, water efficiency, resource management, and ecosystem protection (p. 3).

Goal 7: It aims to ensure universal access to modern energy, increase the share of renewable energy, and improve energy efficiency (p. 3).

Goal 8: SDG 8 promotes sustainable economic growth, job creation, labor rights, equal pay, youth employment, and financial access while ensuring environmental sustainability and eradicating forced labour (p. 3).

Goal 9: SDG 9 focuses on building resilient infrastructure, promoting sustainable industrialization, fostering innovation, enhancing financial access for small enterprises, and advancing clean technologies and research (p. 4).

Goal 10: It aims to reduce inequalities by promoting income growth for the poorest, ensuring equal opportunities, eliminating discrimination, adopting fair policies, strengthening financial regulations, increasing representation for developing countries, and supporting safe migration (p. 4).

Goal 11: SDG 11 aims to create sustainable cities by ensuring affordable housing, safe transportation, inclusive urbanization, disaster resilience, environmental protection, and access to green spaces (p. 4).

Goal 12: SDG 12 promotes sustainable consumption and production by reducing waste, managing resources efficiently, encouraging sustainable business practices, and raising awareness for eco-friendly lifestyles (p. 5).

Goal 13: It focuses on strengthening resilience to climate threats, integrating climate policies, and raising awareness for climate action (p. 5).

Goal 14: SDG 14 aims to reduce marine pollution, protect ecosystems, address ocean acidification, regulate fishing, conserve marine areas, eliminate harmful support, and promote sustainable marine resource use (p. 5).

Goal 15: SDG 15 focuses on conserving ecosystems, forests, and biodiversity, combating desertification, restoring degraded land, preventing species extinction, ensuring fair genetic resource use, and addressing wildlife trafficking and invasive species (p. 6).

Goal 16: This initiative focuses on reducing violence, corruption, and organized crime, ensuring justice and legal identity for all, and promoting transparent, inclusive institutions (p. 6).

Goal 17: SDG 17 focuses on strengthening global partnerships for sustainable development through financial support, trade, technology transfer, capacity-building, policy coherence, and data collection, particularly for developing countries (p. 7).

The 2030 Agenda's "indivisibility" is a key component. The SDGs are interconnected, and efforts to accomplish one goal can either support or hinder the progress of others. For multiple reasons, information, data, and scientific evidence on the connections between the SDGs are essential (European Parliament, 2023). Leal Filho et al. (2017) emphasize that understanding these relationships is crucial, as the SDGs highlight the interdependence of nature and humanity. Some causal and/or statistical links between goals, targets, and indicators are referred to as inter-linkages in the SDGs (Frone et al., 2020, p. 55).

The researchers assert that these connections are reflected in SDG 1 (ending poverty) and SDG 3 (ensuring good health), which are inherently interdependent. In other words, financial stability enhances access to healthcare, while improved health enables individuals to sustain their livelihoods. These goals illustrate how social and economic progress contribute to overall well-being, as they are closely linked to clean water (SDG 6), employment opportunities (SDG 8), and the reduction of inequality (SDG 10). However, urbanization (SDG 11) presents significant challenges. The expansion of cities leads to higher pollution levels from industrial activities and traffic, which negatively impact both water resources (SDG 6) and climate stability (SDG 13). Likewise, water pollution (SDG 6) poses a threat to ecosystems (SDG 15), highlighting the necessity of maintaining environmental balance (p. 58).

1.3. The Concept of Awareness in Sustainable Development

1.3.1. Definition

There are multiple definitions of awareness, varying across disciplines, with each perspective emphasizing different aspects. A general and objective definition of awareness used in masked-prime studies (experiments using subliminal stimuli) is the ability to make accurate choices beyond random guessing in forced-choice tasks (Merikle, 1984, p. 449). Dourish and Bellotti's (1992) definition of awareness highlights the relational aspect of awareness, emphasizing how understanding the actions of others shapes and influences one's own behaviour (p. 107). Furthermore, the concept is described as the capacity to notice, sense, or be aware of things happening around you, such as events, objects, or sensory experiences, and is used to describe the degree of one's awareness or consciousness (Gafoor, 2012). Therefore, awareness of the SDGs can be defined as the ability to recognize and understand the importance of the goals, their interconnections, and how personal and collective actions contribute to achieving them, based on knowledge, social context, and sensory experiences. This concept is central to this study, which explores how awareness levels affect participation in sustainability initiatives and shape attitudes toward global development goals.

1.3.2. Importance

Awareness of the SDGs plays a crucial role in their successful implementation, as it helps individuals and communities understand their significance, interconnections, and the actions needed to achieve them. According to Jati et al. (2019), people's awareness and level of knowledge about the SDGs, both generally and particularly, are determined by how much society knows about them. This awareness influences how important people and governments consider SDGs, impacting their commitment to implementing SDG-related practices (164). Jan & Muzami (2024) emphasize that contribution to sustainable development is possible only

when individuals are aware, properly informed and have a constructive perspective on it (p, 917). The researchers also highlight that changes in attitudes, habits, and understanding are required for sustainable development to occur.

1.4. Awareness of SDG's and Its Relationship to Sustainable Behavior

Knowledge of the SDGs primarily serves and acts as a bridge between personal values and such behavior. While a deeper understanding of the SDGs may not directly alter individuals' sustainable actions, it encourages students to critically reflect on their own sustainability practices (Ortiz-Gómez et al., 2025). This is further supported by Avelar and Farina (2022), who found that participants' self-reported sustainable behaviors were influenced by both their economic attitudes and the sustainability knowledge they had acquired. Therefore, to grasp how SDGs awareness can lead to meaningful actions, it is necessary to define the concept of sustainable behaviour and consider the underlying factors that drive individuals to adopt such practices.

1.4.1. Sustainable Behavior

Achieving the SDGs requires an understanding of key concepts, including sustainable behavior, which refers to actions that balance present needs while ensuring the well-being of future generations (Bonnes & Bonaiuto, 2002, as cited in Tapia-Fonllem et al., 2013, p. 712). Sustainable behavior is deeply intertwined with sustainable lifestyles, which involve daily choices and social practices that reduce environmental harm, such as conserving resources, lowering emissions, and minimizing waste, while also promoting social equity and a higher quality of life (UN Environment, 2017). However, despite the desire to act sustainably, people are often hindered by unconscious habits, impulses, and cognitive biases (Manning, 2009). According to Al-Wadai (2022), achieving meaningful change requires collective efforts across social, political, religious, and environmental domains (as cited in Al-Shahrani et al., 2024, p. 3). While technological advancements play a role, they alone are insufficient; fostering

sustainable behavior ultimately depends on shifting individual attitudes and actions (Al-Shahrani et al.).

1.4.2. Theoretical Frameworks and Models Explaining Sustainable Behavior

1.4.2.1. Planned Behaviour Theory

The Theory of Planned Behavior, developed in 1991 by scientist Icek Ajzen as an expansion of his previous Theory of Reasoned Action, is among the most widely recognized theories explaining behavior (Al-Shahrani et al., 2024, p. 7). The idea of planned behavior states that behavioral intention is the primary factor that determines human behavior (Manstead & Parker, 1995, p. 70). Zhao, et al (2022) explain that attitudes toward conduct, subjective standards, and perceived behavioral control can all be used to predict those intentions. Therefore, a positive attitude toward sustainable development fosters intentions that are more likely to manifest in actions supporting environmental, social, and economic sustainability (Jan & Muzami, 2024, p. 918).

1.4.2.2. Social Role Theory

The Social Role theory suggests that a person's behavior and interactions are shaped by their societal role (Al-Shahrani et al., 2024). Similarly, Ridgeway (2001) emphasises that in certain situations, social roles that are associated with a specific environment, like jobs, can significantly influence behavior (p. 14185). According to this view, those who have prominent social roles and places in society are more conscious, and it is expected that they will act responsibly and sustainably (Al-Shahrani et al., p. 8).

1.4.2.3. Social Exchange Theory

One of the most important conceptual frameworks for comprehending conduct in the workplace is social exchange theory (SET) (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005, p. 874). The authors highlight that this theory sets guidelines for exchange, emphasizing the need for both parties to maintain trust and loyalty (p. 875). Further, individuals who prioritize exchange in their

interactions are more likely to demonstrate behavior involving the repayment of favors compared to those who do not (Cropanzano & Mitchell, p. 877). According to Al-Shahrani et al. (2024) those who depend on their environment to meet their essential needs become more conscious of possible risks and their immediate effects. This awareness fosters a stronger sense of responsibility toward protecting the environment for their well-being (p. 8).

1.4.2.4. The Human Needs Theory

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is a psychological theory that outlines a five-tier model of essential requirements, often depicted as a pyramid. These tiers include physiological needs, safety needs, love and belongingness, esteem needs, and self-actualization (Simons et al., 1987). Doyal & Gough (1984) emphasise that these fundamental necessities play a defining role in shaping societies, policies, and the future of the world (p. 6). The theory suggests that individuals prioritize physiological needs as the foundation for survival. In some cases, this focus may lead to unsustainable behaviors, such as environmental pollution, as they strive to secure food and financial stability (Al-Shahrani et al., 2024, p. 8).

1.4.2.5. Model Hungerford & Volk (1990) for Responsible Environmental Behavior - Sustainable Behavior

Hollweg et al. acknowledge that the concept of responsible sustainable behavior stems from experiences that inspire new actions and foster continuous learning (as cited in Olagbaju, 2021, p. 18). The model underscores the importance of awareness and knowledge as fundamental drivers of sustainable behavior change. It suggests that acquiring knowledge is essential for shaping intentions, ultimately leading to the adoption of responsible and sustainable actions (Al-Shahrani et al., 2024, p. 9).

1.5. Socio-Linguistic Factors Influencing Global Awareness of SDGs

Understanding global awareness of SDGs requires not only access to information but also an examination of how personal and social characteristics shape action. Socio-linguistic factors such as age, gender, geographical context, linguistic background, and level of education plays a critical role in shaping individuals' engagement with sustainability issues (UNESCO, 2024a; Murphy, 2014; Wiernik et al., 2013; Yuan et al., 2021). These factors are taken into account in the present research to better understand the variations in SDGs awareness and action. The following sections explore how these dimensions contribute to varying levels of SDG awareness and action across different populations.

1.5.1. Age and Generational Differences

Age is one of the most important socio-linguistic factors that influence how individuals perceive and act upon environmental issues. Wiernik et al. (2013) emphasise that young individuals are typically more environmentally aware and concerned about long-term impacts due to their future-oriented focus. On the other hand, older individuals often focus on immediate rewards due to their shorter time perspective. They seek emotional fulfillment in the present, which may lead them to consume resources more freely. Consequently, they might conserve less, cause more environmental harm, and make fewer eco-friendly choices (p. 828).

1.5.2. Gender and SDG Awareness

Gender is not inherently fixed or biologically determined, but rather it is a social construct that is performed based on societal norms (Lindqvist et al., 2020, p. 333). According to Yuan et al. (2021), although male and female students may have similar awareness of the SDGs, gender influences how they prioritize and act on information. This suggests a need for SDG awareness programs that are sensitive to gender differences.

1.5.3. Geographical Location

Geographical location plays a significant role in achieving the SDGs. Copenhagen, London, and Reykjavik in Iceland are recognized as some of the most sustainable cities in the world. Each of these cities effectively promotes sustainability by advancing energy management, transportation systems, and urban planning (Going Green, 2020). These northern cities not only lead in sustainable practices but also demonstrate how geographical location plays a key role in achieving the SDGs.

1.5.4. Linguistic Background

A person's linguistic background can impact how they engage with and interpret the SDGs. The concept refers to the foundational grasp of language principles and their practical application in communication and comprehension (Aron, 1922, p. 75). According to UNESCO (2024a), languages are important for education and sustainable development, shaping how people learn, communicate, and interact with society. Language equips individuals with critical communication skills needed to engage actively in social discourse, thus advancing socio-cultural sustainability (Toppo & Rahman, 2020, p. 91). Growing awareness of the world's cultural and linguistic diversity has highlighted the urgent need to protect this heritage as it faces the threat of gradual erosion (UNESCO).

1.5.5. Level of Education

Education is essential for preserving and promoting global diversity, fostering a sustainable relationship between languages, cultures, and the environment (UNESCO, 2024b). According to Murphy (2014), education systems provide individuals with the cognitive tools necessary to critically engage with concepts such as sustainability. This implies that individuals with higher educational levels generally have better access to the tools needed to understand complex issues like the SDGs (Veeran et al., 2024, p. 5).

1.6. Education and SDGs Awareness

1.6.1. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

The World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) report, "Our Common Future," served as the foundation for the concept of education for sustainable development (ESD) (Kopnina & Meijers, 2014, p. 188). Ssossé et al. (2021) argue that education plays a critical role in fostering a sustainable environment, both in the present and for the future. ESD is an approach to education that empowers individuals with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to make informed decisions and take actions that promote sustainability. It addresses global challenges like climate change, resource use, and inequality, aiming to create positive societal and environmental change (UNESCO, 2022).

ESD for 2030 seeks to accomplish the 17 SDGs in order to create a more equitable and sustainable world through a three-dimensional framework (UNESCO, 2021, p. 7). Schroter (2010) emphasises that its objectives focus on promoting three types of sustainability including social, economic, and environmental sustainability (Kopnina & Meijers, 2014, p. 190). Öhman found that education can integrate the diverse perspectives of the three pillars of sustainable development, emphasizing their connections and interdependence across local, regional, and global contexts, as well as over time and space (as cited in Ssossé et al., p. 2). Additionally, rather than prioritizing results and long-term effects, ESD programs have primarily concentrated on activity and output goals (Kopnina & Meijers, 2014, p. 196).

A key feature of ESD is its pluralistic educational approach, which promotes diverse perspectives, critical thinking, and open dialogue (Ssossé et al., 2021, p. 3). In this context, a challenge emerges in selecting the most suitable teaching method while ensuring alignment with ESD's objectives (Kopnina & Meijers, 2014, p. 196). According to the authors, many researchers in the field have proposed various methodologies, such as nature-based learning,

social learning, action competence, citizenship education, and dialogical learning. Building on this, Zint underscored the importance of critically examining both the objectives and teaching methods to ensure their effective alignment. Without this thorough evaluation, achieving the intended goals would be unlikely (as cited in Kopnina & Meijers, p. 197).

1.6.2. SDGs Awareness in Higher Education

According to UNESCO, recent studies have explored the integration of ESD into university curricula, with a particular focus on addressing the SDGs (Filho et al., 2024). Researchers further emphasize the vital role of these institutions in promoting sustainability by fostering students' awareness and shaping future generations' attitudes toward responsible environmental and social practices (Michael et al., 2020, p. 113). According to Velazquez et al. (2006) SHEI is a Higher Education Institution (HEI) that takes proactive measures to identify, mitigate, and prevent harmful environmental, economic, social, and health impacts at both regional and global scales. Through responsible resource management, it upholds its core missions of education, research, community engagement, collaboration, and institutional leadership, all with the goal of guiding society toward a more sustainable world (as cited in Aleixo et al., 2018, p. 4).

HEIs play a key role as leading collaborators in global sustainability initiatives. To effectively implement and promote sustainability, HEIs must first identify and address the challenges associated with its integration (Aleixo et al., 2018, p. 4). The key barriers to implementing sustainability in HEIs include the complexity of the sustainability concept, financial constraints, resistance to change, rigid organizational structures, insufficient training and expertise, and lack of engagement from stakeholders (Aleixo et al., p. 5). Given its importance, stakeholder involvement is essential for advancing sustainability within HEIs, with leaders, faculty, administrative staff, students, and external stakeholders playing key roles in integrating sustainable practices (Aleixo et al., pp. 7-8).

1.7. Language and Sustainable Development Goals

According to Zygmunt (2016), while the environmental and economic domains are widely emphasized, the socio-cultural aspect, especially language and communication, is often overlooked. The researcher further emphasizes the role of language as a key tool for perceiving the world as an interconnected system and facilitating effective communication and negotiation (p. 113). This view is echoed by Trask (2003), who asserts that “Without language, we could hardly have created the human world we know” (p. 1). Gertrude et al. (2020) define language as a distinct human trait that functions as a primary tool for communication and interaction. It exists in both verbal and nonverbal forms, where verbal language relies on sounds and symbols, while nonverbal communication includes gestures, facial expressions, and signs to convey meaning without speech (p. 54). Sapir introduced the concept of "linguistic determinism," a theory that highlights the strong link between language and thought. According to this theory language shapes our thinking, influencing our perceptions and behaviors in the world (Zygmunt, 2016, p. 113).

Gertrude et al., (2020) explain how language promotes or helps to achieve the 17 global goals in five different ways. First, it enables the creation of the goals by shaping thoughts and ideas, making it possible to conceive and define them. Second, language facilitates the clear expression of the 17 SDGs, allowing representatives from different countries to communicate and adopt them effectively. Third, it plays a key role in interpreting and understanding the goals, ensuring inclusivity across diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Fourth, language supports the execution of the SDGs by overcoming communication barriers and ensuring policies are effectively implemented. Finally, it allows for the evaluation of progress, helping to identify challenges, make necessary adjustments, and improve outcomes (pp. 59-60). Through these functions, language remains essential in advancing sustainable development.

Bowden and Zygmunt highlight the strong connection between English and Education for Sustainability, emphasizing its influence as the dominant language of the 21st century in shaping global perspectives (as cited in Bektashi & Xhaferi, 2020, p. 80). Similarly, Phillipson (2009) emphasizes that English is the most widely studied foreign language, while other languages are increasingly losing prominence (p. 336). Therefore, it can be concluded that learning English as a foreign language (EFL) can enhance students' motivation to develop their sustainable development competencies (SDC). Through engaging English learning activities, students can not only improve their language skills but also gain a deeper understanding of sustainability-related concepts, fostering a more informed and responsible global perspective (Asta & Margarita, 2018, p. 45).

Conclusion

This chapter explored the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), their origins, significance, and the factors influencing global awareness. It highlighted the role of education, language, and socio-linguistic factors in shaping sustainable behaviors and engagement with the SDGs. Various theoretical models explained how individuals and societies adopt sustainable practices. Additionally, the chapter emphasized the importance of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and the critical role of language in communicating sustainability concepts effectively. Ultimately, achieving the SDGs requires inclusive education, multilingual accessibility, and greater awareness, ensuring that sustainability efforts are accessible and impactful for all.

Chapter Two: The Role of English as a Foreign Language

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Introduction

As the world becomes more interconnected, the need for collaborative efforts to tackle pressing global challenges such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation, climate change, becomes ever more crucial. The SDGs offer a comprehensive framework for addressing these issues. In this context, EFL education holds significant potential in promoting awareness of the SDGs. English, being the main language for international communication, allows individuals to engage with global discourse, share knowledge, and participate in initiatives that cross national borders. EFL education, through its structured approach to language learning, not only enhances linguistic skills but also encourages critical thinking and a deeper understanding of global issues. By integrating SDG-related topics into language curricula, learners gain access to a broader range of resources, research, and discussions on sustainability, thereby equipping them with the tools to contribute meaningfully to these global efforts.

This chapter explores how EFL education promotes global awareness of the SDGs. As future leaders and change-makers, students are encouraged to take an active role in shaping a more sustainable world, thus reinforcing the transformative power of education in achieving the SDGs and ensuring a better future for all. Furthermore, as students become more aware of the interconnectedness of global challenges, they are better positioned to make informed decisions and adopt behaviors that align with the principles of sustainability, ultimately contributing to the collective effort toward a more just, equitable, and sustainable future.

2.1. Definition of EFL

EFL refers to learning English in a country where it is not the primary language of daily communication. This is distinct from ESL, where English is learned in environments where it is the dominant language. According to Gebhard (2006, p. 142), EFL is typically taught in structured educational settings such as schools, universities, and language institutes where

students do not have daily exposure to native speakers or real-life usage. The process of EFL learning emphasizes formal instruction, often delivered in a classroom environment.

Nunan (2008, p. 45) explains that formal instruction in EFL focuses on developing the four major language skills-reading, writing, listening, and speaking- while minimizing interaction with native speakers outside of class. This structured approach contrasts with ESL, where students typically learn through immersion and real-life interaction. Richards and Rodgers (2014, p. 78) expand on this idea, stating that EFL education incorporates a variety of teaching methods aimed at improving practical communication skills necessary for learners to engage with the world beyond their immediate environments.

In academic contexts, “The goal of EFL is not just to develop linguistic proficiency but also to enable learners to communicate effectively in academic and professional settings” (EFL Cafe, 2024, para. 4). This focus on academic learning aligns with Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p.91), who highlight that EFL is often used as a tool for accessing other academic fields such as science, law, and business, bridging the gap between language learning and subject-matter education.

Additionally, Kachru (1992, p. 103) introduces the concept of World Englishes, explaining that while English is learned as a foreign language in many countries, it is influenced by local languages, cultures, and social contexts. This perspective highlights that EFL is not just about learning standard English but also about adapting the language to meet local needs and cultural identities. Phillipson (1992, p. 75) further explores the implications of this global spread of English, arguing that EFL can sometimes contribute to linguistic imperialism, where English dominance affects the development and status of local languages.

2.2. The Significance of EFL

Given these global demands, the significance of EFL transcends mere functional language use. The following sections delve into the role of EFL in fostering academic success,

promoting intercultural understanding, and enhancing socio-economic prospects, thereby underscoring its increasing importance in today's interconnected world.

2.2.1. EFL as a Tool for Communication and Globalization

EFL is integral to globalization. Crystal (2003) argues that English has become the dominant language for international communication, influencing business, science, technology, and diplomacy (p. 25). Through EFL education, individuals acquire the language skills necessary to participate in global communication, thereby enhancing their global connectivity. This positions EFL as a key factor in enabling global corporation, as proficiency in English allows individuals to engage in international trade, collaborate on scientific research, and access a vast array of global media content.

McCollage (2023) asserts that proficiency in English is crucial for expanding professional networks, engaging in global trade, and entering new markets. As English has become the dominant language for multinational companies and international organizations, those who speak it are better positioned to communicate and collaborate on a global scale (para.5).

2.2.2. EFL in Education and Academic Mobility

In the academic field, Richards and Rodgers (2014) emphasize that English plays a crucial role in academic communication by providing access to a wide range of global research and facilitating international collaboration (p. 82). English functions as the primary medium through which scholars across different countries share their findings, participate in conferences, and publish research. This widespread use of English enables academics to overcome language barriers and engage in meaningful dialogue, in addition to the exchange of ideas on a global scale. Moreover, proficiency in English supports academic mobility by allowing students and researchers to study, teach, or collaborate in institutions where English

is the language of instruction or research. Thus, English not only serves as a tool for communication but also as a bridge that connects academic communities worldwide.

2.2.3. EFL in digital literacy and technological advancement

As Zhao (2012) points out, digital communication and online learning platforms require proficiency in English for effective engagement and participation in global conversation and technological innovation (p. 58). Consequently, EFL education is vital in enabling individuals to access digital tools and participate in the technological revolution that is reshaping the world.

2.2.4. EFL in cultural exchange and media access

Byram (2008) notes that language education is inherently related to inter-cultural competence, enabling learners to understand and appreciate cultural differences (p. 24). In a world where media, including films, books, and music, is often produced in English, proficiency in the language allows individuals to access and enjoy cultural products from around the world, thereby enriching their cultural experiences.

Additionally, Kramsch (1993) emphasizes that language learning is deeply embedded in cultural learning, where learners gain insights into the cultural contexts of the language they are learning (p. 13). EFL learners, therefore, acquire not only the ability to communicate but also the cultural knowledge that allows them to interact meaningfully in a globalized world.

2.3. Overview of Objectives and Scope of EFL Education

2.3.1. Objectives of EFL Education

In EFL education, the focus is not limited to teaching the technical aspects of the language like grammar and vocabulary. One of the key goals of EFL is to help learners become more globally aware and culturally sensitive. By integrating diverse cultural perspectives into language lessons, students are given the opportunity to explore the complexities of global issues, which fosters a sense of empathy and understanding toward different cultures. This broadens their world-view and prepares them to communicate more effectively across borders.

As students engage with a variety of international perspectives, they begin to appreciate the social and cultural contexts that shape language use, which goes beyond just mastering the mechanics of communication. This deeper understanding not only enhances their language proficiency but also equips them with the skills needed to navigate a multicultural and interconnected world. Consequently, language education serves as a critical tool in shaping future global citizens who are well-prepared to contribute to solving international problems, whether in business, diplomacy, or social engagement (Eckardt, 2021, p. 13).

Additionally, EFL programs encourage the development of critical thinking skills by helping students analyze, interpret, and express ideas in English. This process is essential for students to participate in meaningful discussions, solve problems, and make informed decisions. By focusing on critical thinking, language education does more than just teach grammar and vocabulary—it empowers learners to engage thoughtfully with the material they encounter. This is especially crucial in academic and professional environments, where the ability to engage deeply with content is highly valued. According to Grade University (2024), fostering critical thinking in EFL education helps students not only understand and communicate but also contribute effectively in various contexts by thinking critically and solving problems.

Moreover, emotional and social factors also play an important role in EFL education. When students feel confident and motivated, they are more likely to succeed in their language learning journey. According to Li, Jiang, and Dewaele (2021), addressing students' emotions and maintaining a supportive classroom environment can significantly influence their learning experience and overall language development. When learners are emotionally supported, they are more likely to stay engaged, persist in their studies, and perform better in language acquisition (p. 123). Therefore, the affective dimension of EFL learning is just as important as

the cognitive aspects, as it directly impacts learners' motivation and their willingness to take risks in using the language.

2.3.2. Scope of EFL Education

The scope of EFL education has expanded considerably over the years, incorporating new teaching methods, technological advancements, and more effective approaches. One of the most notable innovations is flipped learning, a method where students study new material independently before attending class, and then engage in interactive activities during lessons. According to Zhou (2023), flipped learning significantly enhances students' speaking and writing abilities, fosters deeper critical thinking, and improves engagement in class activities (p. 112). By engaging with the material prior to class, learners are better prepared to use their language skills actively during class time, promoting more effective language acquisition and improving their ability to apply new knowledge in real-world situations.

“The flipped classroom approach provides a more engaging and participatory learning experience, accommodating diverse learning styles while promoting active participation, peer collaboration, and the development of critical thinking skills” (Bridge Education, 2023, para. 5). Another research suggests that this approach enhances students' listening skills and contributes to improved grammatical accuracy, though the latter may not always be statistically significant (Al-Harbi & Alshumaimeri, 2016, p. 115). This may be due to the flipped model's stronger impact on receptive skills through interactive learning.

Additionally, technology has played a transformative role in modern EFL education, offering new opportunities for students to practice and engage with the language. Murphy (2014) suggests that technology enables learners to access authentic materials—such as podcasts, videos, and news articles in English—enriching their language-learning experience (p. 102). These tools offer flexibility, allowing students to practice at their own pace and on

their own schedule, making language learning more accessible and less reliant on traditional classroom settings.

Moreover, EFL education now accommodates a diverse range of learners, from young children to older adults. Research indicates that introducing English at an early age can enhance cognitive development and improve long-term language retention. Murphy (2014) highlights that children exposed to English early in life develop a stronger understanding of the language, which benefits their academic and professional futures (p. 104). Early exposure to a second language, as suggested by Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis, facilitates language acquisition by providing rich, meaningful language input during critical developmental stages.

2.4. EFL in Contemporary Education

As English continues to serve as the global language for communication, business, science, and technology, the role of EFL education becomes increasingly important. Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie (2021) explain that English proficiency enhances students' access to academic and professional opportunities, making EFL a vital component in modern education (p. 65). The ability to communicate effectively in English opens doors to a wider range of careers, educational opportunities, and international collaborations, which are essential in a globalized world.

Moreover, proficiency in English allows students to engage with a vast body of knowledge, as most scientific research, academic publications, and educational resources are produced in English (Richard & Rodgers, 2014, p. 130).

Additionally, EFL reinforces cross-cultural communication. In a world where globalization connects people from diverse backgrounds, the ability to communicate effectively in English promotes international cooperation and cultural exchange (Crystal, 2003, p. 89).

Babazade (2024) explains that platforms that use interactive features such as quizzes, simulations, and real-world conversations make learning more engaging and effective. These

tools not only help with vocabulary retention but also improve overall language skills. Artificial intelligence has further personalized the learning experience by offering adaptive feedback tailored to each student's performance, as seen in AI-driven applications like Duolingo, which simulate real-world conversations to build fluency and confidence (p. 124). Moreover, the flexibility offered by these tools, which can be accessed at any time and from any location, makes learning more accessible to diverse groups of learners, including those in remote areas or with busy schedules. Ultimately, technology has transformed the way EFL is taught, creating a more interactive, personalized, and efficient learning environment (Babazade, 2024, p. 129).

2.5. Globalization and Its Impact on EFL

2.5.1. Implications of Globalization for Language Learning

Globalization has profoundly reshaped language learning by increasing the demand for English proficiency in international contexts. As economic, cultural, and technological connections grow across borders, English has become the key to gaining access to global resources. As Hooda (2022) asserts, "English serves as a foundational tool of globalization, facilitating transnational communication, commerce, and intercultural exchange, thereby enhancing individuals' access to both economic and educational mobility" (pp. 15–16).

2.5.1.1. Globalization and The Spread of English

Graddol (2006) notes, the increasing use of English in global communication has made it an essential tool for those wishing to participate in international trade, diplomacy, and business (p. 23). Consequently, individuals who are proficient in English often have a significant advantage in accessing opportunities in these global arenas.

2.5.1.2. The Role of Technology in Enhancing English's Global Presence

Graddol (2006) mentioned that digital technologies have played a crucial role in expanding the reach of English, making it the primary medium for accessing information, educational resources, and professional networks across the globe (p. 24). This technological

shift has thus made English more ingrained in daily communication, further reinforcing its status as a global language.

2.5.1.3. Opportunities for Social Mobility

The widespread use of English also provides individuals with significant opportunities for social mobility. Graddol (2006) argues that being proficient in English has become a key determinant in accessing higher education, job opportunities, and career advancement, particularly in multinational companies and international organizations (p. 25). In many regions, English proficiency is not just a valuable skill but a necessary one for participating in the global economy.

2.5.1.4. Challenges to Linguistic Diversity

However, the rise of English has also brought about challenges, especially in terms of linguistic diversity. Kachru (1992) identifies this phenomenon as linguistic imperialism, where the global dominance of English leads to the marginalization of other languages, threatening their existence (p. 156). The increasing dominance of English, particularly in education, media, and business, can result in the erosion of local linguistic traditions, as communities increasingly turn to English for broader communication and economic participation.

2.5.1.5. Globalization and the Marginalization of Other Languages

The widespread influence of English also raises concerns about linguistic homogenization, where the global prominence of English diminishes the importance of other languages. According to Kachru (1992), this dominance results in the devaluation of other languages and the eventual marginalization of those that are less widely spoken (p. 157).

2.6. Challenges Faced by EFL Learners in a Global Context

2.6.1. Access to Resources

As Pennycook (2007) observes; the digital divide exacerbates inequalities in education, especially for learners from lower socioeconomic backgrounds who may not have the resources

to access online learning tools (p. 41). While students in wealthier regions benefit from those tools, those in developing countries may face significant barriers in acquiring English proficiency due to limited access to modern learning technologies (Pennycook, 2007, p. 42).

2.6.2. Cultural Barriers

Byram (2008) suggests that to communicate successfully in English, learners must also develop intercultural competence—understanding the cultural contexts that shape language use (p. 16). Without this understanding, learners may struggle with idiomatic expressions, culturally specific references, and social norms embedded within the language. For instance, communication styles vary widely across cultures, and EFL learners may find it difficult to interpret the subtitles of English conversations, leading to miscommunication. Phillipson (1992) further discusses how the dominance of English can lead to cultural homogenization, where local languages and practices are overshadowed by Anglo-Saxon cultural norms. This not only affects learners' sense of identity but can also make them feel disconnected from their cultural roots (p. 75).

2.7. Sociolinguistic Factors Influencing EFL Learning

2.7.1. Age

Age significantly impacts language acquisition, with younger learners demonstrating greater flexibility, and ease in acquiring languages. A key factor behind this is cognitive flexibility, which allows younger learners to easily adapt to and grasp new language structures including pronunciation and grammar (Kuppens, 2010, p. 289).

According to Haukås, Bjørke, and Dypedahl (2018), adult learners tend to be more strategic in organizing information, applying critical thinking, and using problem-solving techniques to grasp complex linguistic concepts (p. 45). Moreover, the study by Kormos and Csizér (2014) sheds light on how older learners tend to use more deliberate and conscious

learning strategies. These learners tend to invest more time in structured learning approaches, reflecting a more methodical learning process compared to younger learners, who may rely more on their intuition (p. 88).

Research also shows that while younger learners benefit from certain biological advantages in language learning, the strategic use of resources by older learners, coupled with a wealth of cognitive strategies, can allow them to achieve high levels of language proficiency. For instance, older learners may use tools such as linguistic awareness, critical thinking, and more deliberate practice in language acquisition, enabling them to overcome the challenges they may face in mastering a new language (Snow, 2010, p. 65).

2.7.2. Gender

As studies have consistently found that females tend to outperform males in language learning. Females are often more motivated and exhibit a higher level of engagement in the language learning process, which contributes to their greater success in acquiring language skills (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995, p. 21). One of the primary factors behind this phenomenon is that females typically use more effective language learning strategies. For instance, females employ collaborative learning methods, such as group discussions, which promote interaction and help with language acquisition (Sunderland, 2000, p.38).

Additionally, socialized gender differences play a crucial role in language learning behaviors. According to Sunderland (2000), societal expectations influence how males and females approach language learning . Females are generally socialized to be more communicative, detail-oriented, and receptive to language tasks, making them more likely to adopt strategies that are beneficial for learning languages. In contrast, males may face more pressure to exhibit competitive or performance-oriented behaviors, which can sometimes limit their participation in collaborative and interactive language learning activities.

Although research frequently highlights that female learners tend to outperform males in certain aspects of language acquisition, particularly in written and verbal tasks, male learners also bring distinct advantages to the language learning process. Studies suggest that men often display a greater willingness to take risks when using a new language, which can significantly boost their oral proficiency and conversational fluency. Their confidence and readiness to engage in communicative situations provide more opportunities for practice, and their lower fear of making mistakes allows for more active and dynamic participation. This proactive approach contributes positively to their language development, particularly in enhancing their speaking skills (Tercanlioglu, 2004).

2.7.3. Academic Level

“Students with a higher academic level can engage with more complex linguistic tasks and understand advanced language structures more effectively” (Snow, 2010, p. 65).

Higher academic achievers tend to be more adept at organizing and managing their learning process. Their ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate their progress allows them to approach language acquisition more effectively. Research highlights that meta-cognitive strategies, such as self-assessment and goal-setting, are critical in second language learning, as they enable students to take control of their learning journey and make necessary adjustments to improve comprehension and retention. These strategies not only enhance language proficiency but also promote independent learning, which is essential for long-term academic success (Anderson, 2002, p. 1).

2.8. EFL Education as a Medium for Sustainable Development Goals

According to Cordova (2024), “students are empowered to build on learning to develop the ability to solve problems, plan, and take-action, taking ownership of these societal problems as their own concerns instead of just aiming to acquire content knowledge and understanding” (p. 5). This statement underscores the transformative potential of integrating SDG-related content into EFL instruction, as it shifts the learning experience from a purely linguistic focus to one that fosters social awareness, agency, and responsible action. By encouraging learners to take ownership of global issues, such pedagogical practices contribute meaningfully to both language development and the cultivation of global citizenship.

Moreover, incorporating SDGs into EFL education allows learners to develop their language proficiency as well as their awareness of pressing global challenges. By integrating real-world sustainability topics into language instruction, educators can help students cultivate the skills needed to contribute to social and economic progress. This approach encourages a sense of global citizenship, empowering students to take part in conversations about climate change, social justice, and economic equality. Ultimately, language education—especially when aligned with SDG principles—prepares learners to engage effectively in both local and international efforts for a more sustainable future (Babaci-Wilhite, 2013, p. 2005).

2.8.1. Increased Access to Global Knowledge and Collaboration

One of the key ways EFL education contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is by equipping learners with the English language skills needed to access global knowledge and participate in international collaboration. English serves as the primary medium for international communication, especially in academic and research settings. According to Crystal (2003), English is the dominant language for scientific publications, global conferences, and research collaborations, making it indispensable for anyone seeking to

engage with the global sustainability agenda (p. 25). EFL learners, by mastering English, gain access to vast bodies of knowledge on climate change, renewable energy, social justice, and other SDGs. This allows learners to explore diverse perspectives, ideas, and solutions from around the world, thereby fostering a deeper understanding of global issues and their interconnections.

2.8.2. Global Discussions on Sustainability and the SDGs

The SDGs are the result of global cooperation to tackle pressing challenges like poverty, inequality, and environmental sustainability. In language education, incorporating SDG-related topics into EFL learning can provide students with both linguistic and global awareness. Research suggests that integrating sustainability topics into English language learning not only enhances students' communication skills but also fosters a sense of social responsibility and engagement with real-world issues (Astawa et al., 2024, p. 8). By weaving discussions on sustainability into EFL curricula, educators can help students develop critical thinking skills while equipping them with the language proficiency needed to participate in international dialogues on sustainability.

Studies show that students who engage with the SDGs in educational settings are more likely to take actions that promote environmental, social, and economic sustainability. According to UNESCO (2024), integrating ESD into curricula helps equip learners with the knowledge, values, and skills needed to address challenges like climate change, biodiversity loss, and social inequality. By fostering critical thinking and global awareness, ESD enables students to make informed decisions and contribute meaningfully to sustainable development efforts.

2.8.3. Impact on Sustainable Behavior

Astawa et al. (2024) emphasize that integrating sustainability topics into EFL education not only enhances students' language proficiency but also broadens their understanding of

critical global challenges. By engaging with topics such as climate change, social justice, and responsible consumption, students develop the vocabulary, critical thinking skills, and communication abilities needed to actively participate in sustainability discussions. This exposure helps learners understand their role in addressing these global concerns, empowering them to contribute meaningfully to sustainability initiatives both within their communities and on an international scale (p. 8).

Furthermore, Honigsfeld and Dove (2019) underscore the importance of collaborative learning environments in EFL classrooms, where peer interaction plays a vital role in language acquisition. Group discussions, problem-solving activities, and project-based learning provide students with opportunities to practice English in meaningful contexts while also deepening their awareness of sustainability issues. When students work together to analyse case studies, debate solutions, or create projects focused on sustainable development, they not only improve their English proficiency but also cultivate a collective sense of responsibility toward global challenges (p. 45).

2.8.4. Language and Advocacy for Sustainability

As language is a powerful tool for advocacy, proficiency in English empowers learners to raise awareness of sustainability issues in various international contexts. Research by Byram (2008) highlights that language education not only improves linguistic abilities but also develops inter-cultural competence, which is a key for understanding the global implications of sustainability efforts (p. 14). This enhanced cultural awareness, when combined with the global reach of English, allows learners to advocate for sustainability in their communities and beyond. As Phillipson (2009) argues, the widespread use of English facilitates the dissemination of sustainability messages and ensures that global audiences are reached, leading to more impactful and widespread environmental and social changes (p. 71).

2.9. The role of EFL in promoting SDG's awareness

Several researchers have investigated the role of EFL in promoting global awareness of SDGs. Munar (2022) examined the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in the EFL classroom as a strategy to effectively achieve the SDGs. The research proposed a structured, student-centered approach, focusing on cooperative tasks and critical thinking. It presented a theoretical plan for an online newspaper project designed for 1st-year ESO students, aimed at linking language learning with real-world issues. This Approach demonstrated how connecting EFL lessons to SDGs through projects like the online newspaper could help students engage with environmental and social challenges, making language learning more relevant and impactful.

In another study, Cardiff (2023) investigated how the SDGs could be integrated into an EFL context to offer a framework for increasing students' awareness of sustainability issues, while also aiding them in acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge. The study was conducted at a private language university in Japan, with students enrolled in an elective EFL course. Several techniques are used in order to collect the needed data like group discussions, critical reflections, and practical activities like role-playing, sustainability excursions (i.e., field trips to places like recycling centers or community gardens to observe real-life sustainability practices), and SDG-focused projects to engage students actively in learning. The results showed that Students developed a deeper awareness and understanding of sustainability issues by the end of the course.

In addition, Abdaoui & El Aggoune (2023) examined EFL learners' attitudes toward incorporating SDGs into their education to enhance cross-cultural communication. This study was conducted at the University of 8 May 1945, Guelma, Algeria, the study involved 81 second-year Master's students. Initially, many students were unfamiliar with sustainable education and

SDGs. However, after raising awareness through a semi-structured questionnaire, the majority of participants expressed positive attitudes toward integrating SDGs into their learning, recognizing its potential to promote lifelong learning and improve cross-cultural communication in EFL contexts.

Furthermore, Mohalla & Kasirajan (2024) conducted research to explore the connection between ELT and SDGs, and the potential impacts of incorporating SDGs into English language teaching. Using a mixed-method approach, the study involved 150 students aged between 14-16 from three institutions in Syria and the UAE. The quantitative aspect examined students' language development by comparing their scores on tests taken before and after the course, while qualitative data were gathered through classroom observations and teacher interviews. These methods focused on student engagement with SDG-related materials and the challenges of integrating SDGs into ELT. Conducted over four months, the study found that incorporating SDGs into ELT not only enhanced language skills but also promoted critical thinking, global awareness, and active citizenship, enriching the students' overall educational experience.

Astawa et al. (2024) carried out a systematic review with the intention to explore the latest trends in the connection between SDGs and English as a Foreign Language learning. This systematic literature review was conducted using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) method, following the four stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and exclusion. A total of 25 studies were identified through a systematic search using keywords such as Sustainability, SDGs, and EFL. The findings revealed that the studies consistently demonstrated positive impacts on students' learning outcomes, global awareness, and environmental consciousness, suggesting an increasing trend of SDG integration in EFL education.

While researchers predominantly focused on the implementation of SDGs in the EFL classroom and education in general, along with various methodologies and trends, this study

specifically examines how learning EFL influences global awareness of SDGs among learners at the University of Guelma.

Conclusion

EFL education is not merely about language acquisition, it is a vital instrument in raising global awareness and engagement with the SDGs. By improving language proficiency, EFL education opens up opportunities for learners to access global knowledge, engage with international conversations, and collaborate across borders on critical issues such as climate change, poverty, and inequality. Incorporating the SDGs into EFL curricula not only enhances students' language skills but also empowers them to become informed global citizens capable of making positive contributions to sustainability. As English continues to be the dominant language for international communication, its role in promoting SDG awareness and fostering global cooperation will only grow. Ultimately, EFL education plays a fundamental role in shaping the next generation of learners who are not linguistically skilled but also socially responsible and committed to sustainable development.

Chapter Three: Field Investigation

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Introduction

This chapter represents the core of the study. It serves as the practical application of the theoretical framework established in the previous two chapters. Specifically, it investigates whether learning EFL influences students' awareness of the SDGs. The research was grounded in statistical and numerical data, supported by insights gathered from EFL students through their responses to the questionnaire (the main data collection tool). Accordingly, the chapter outlines the research methodology, including the population and sampling procedures, a detailed description of the questionnaire, and the process of its administration. It also presents and analyzes the data collected from the questionnaire responses, interpreting key findings in relation to the research question. Finally, it concludes with some pedagogical implications and recommendations for future research.

3.1. Research Method and Design

3.1.1. Overall, Method

To conduct the research, a quantitative-descriptive method was adopted. Descriptive research designs, as stated by Aggarwal and Ranganathan (2019), are used to describe the relationship between variables associated with a specific phenomenon, without exploring causal connections (p. 34). On the other hand, quantitative research focuses on measuring variables using numerical data. At its core it aims to determine how much, how many or to what extent and draws conclusions that apply to broader groups (Ghanad, 2023, p. 3794). This approach fits the study, and aligns with its objectives. The quantitative approach is typically followed because it suits the larger sample size. In addition, it enables the examination of the relationship between EFL and awareness of the SDGs.

3.1.2. Population and Sampling

The present study investigates a sample of students from the Department of English at the University of 08 Mai 1945-Guelma during the academic year 2024-2025. The sample

consists of eighty (80) students, equally divided between forty (40) first-year LMD students and forty (40) Master Two students. These groups were deliberately chosen to represent varying academic levels and experiences with EFL learning. Their insights are particularly valuable for examining the role of EFL in promoting awareness of SDGs. The inclusion of both beginners and advanced learners allows for a comparative analysis of whether EFL promotes awareness of the SDGs.

3.1.3. Data Collection Tool

In this study, a semi-structured questionnaire that combined a set of closed-ended and open-ended items was used as the primary data collection tool to describe the relationship between the two variables. It enabled the collection of both quantifiable data and richer individual insights among EFL learners. As Artino et al., (2014) highlight, questionnaires are particularly useful for investigating intangible concepts like opinions, attitudes, and beliefs, which are often challenging to measure directly (p. 464). Furthermore, researchers commonly utilize tools like questionnaires to collect numerical data, guided by principles of statistics, logical reasoning, and objectivity (Ghanad, 2023, p. 3795). In addition, it allows for data to be gathered efficiently from a large number of participants in a short amount of time (Jenn, 2006, p. 32). This format made it appropriate for addressing the objectives of a quantitative-descriptive design.

3.1.4. Description of the Questionnaire

The present questionnaire was developed as a primary tool for data collection in this study. It was distributed independently to two distinct groups, referred to here as “freshmen” (first-year LMD students) and “seniors” (Master 2 students). The main aim is to measure and describe the extent to which learning EFL is associated with university students’ awareness of the SDGs. It consists of 17 questions designed based on the theoretical chapters of this study.

It includes both closed-ended items for quantitative data, and open-ended questions for additional insights. These questions are organized into three main sections (Appendix A).

The questionnaire began with a set of four questions aimed at collecting general background information about the participants. This initial section focused on basic demographic and academic data (Q1 to Q3). Two of the questions are closed-ended, asking about age, and gender. The last one is open-ended to find how many years the participants have been studying English. The purpose of this section is to provide contextual background for the analysis and to help categorize the responses based on participants' profiles.

Participants' familiarity with and understanding of the SDGs serves as the central theme of the second section (Q4 to Q8). It begins by asking them to rate their level of knowledge and to identify the areas they are most familiar with, such as ecological, social, or economic aspects. The section also explores their views on the importance of raising awareness about the goals for global sustainability. Another question examines whether language learning can support the spread of such awareness. Finally, the section looks into the main challenges students face in building their understanding.

Section three on the other hand focuses on the connection between English language learning and students' awareness of global issues, particularly the SDGs (Q9 to Q17). It examines whether learning English has improved students' understanding of such issues and how often they encounter SDG-related content in English. The section explores the sources through which students are exposed to this content and whether teachers include SDG topics in their lessons. It also gathers opinions on whether EFL courses should incorporate SDG themes to raise awareness and which learning activities are most effective in doing so. Additionally, it looks into how English has helped students engage in SDG-related discussions or projects.

Even though all the previous questions are closed-ended, they all approximately open the doors for additional clarification. Finally, two open-ended questions give students the

opportunity to share their ideas and suggestions. These questions focus on how EFL teachers or curriculum developers can better integrate SDG topics into lessons. They also explore ways to enhance the role of English learning in promoting global awareness.

3.1.5. Procedures of Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered in two formats, printed and online. The first-year LMD students received hard copies of the questionnaire at the University of Guelma 08 May 1945. To support their understanding, additional explanations were provided during distribution. The questionnaire was handed out across different classes to ensure participation from individuals in all groups. In contrast, the Master 2 students completed the online version of the questionnaire (<https://forms.gle/tdVWZ51NQuZ7xpCm7>) which was created using Google Forms (Appendix B). This was because they typically stop attending classes in the second semester, making it difficult to distribute and collect hard copies in person. These students were reached through Messenger groups, personal emails, and social media accounts. The data collection process began on March 24th, 2025, and concluded on April 10th, 2025.

3.2. Analysis of first year students' questionnaire

Question One: What is your age?

Table 3. 1

Students' Age Range

Age Range	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
17-20	36	90%
21-25	3	7.5%
26 years and above	1	2.5%
Total	40	100%

Table (3.1) shows that (90%) of the participants fall within the 17-20 age range. A smaller proportion falls into older age groups: 7.5% are between 21-25 years old, and 2.5% are 26 and above.

Question two: What is your gender?

Table 3. 2

Students' Gender

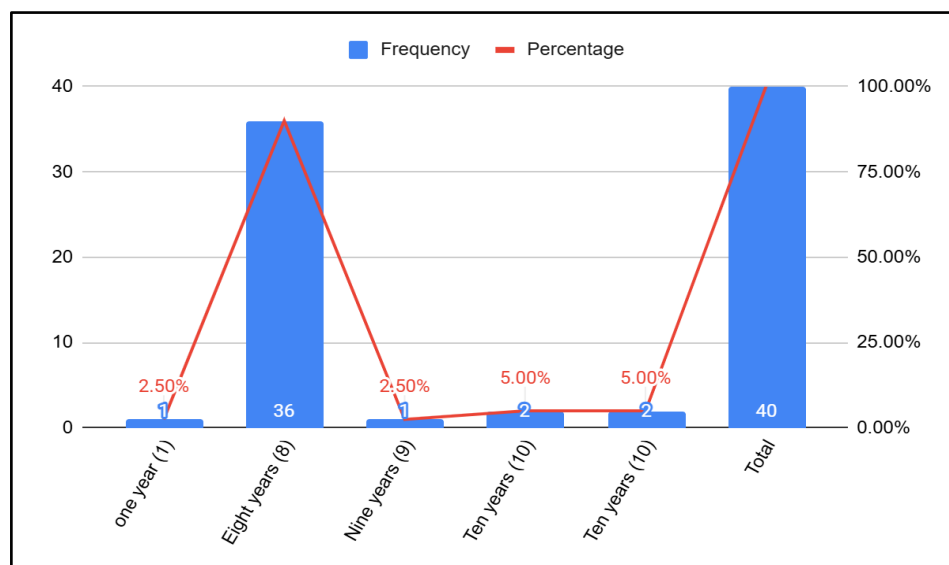
Gender	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Male	2	5%
Female	38	95%
Total	40	100%

As presented in Table 3.2, a clear gender imbalance is evident among the freshmen, the vast majority are females, with (95%) identifying as female and only (5%) identifying as male.

Question Three: How many years have you been studying English (including this year)?

Figure 3. 1

Students' Years of Studying English



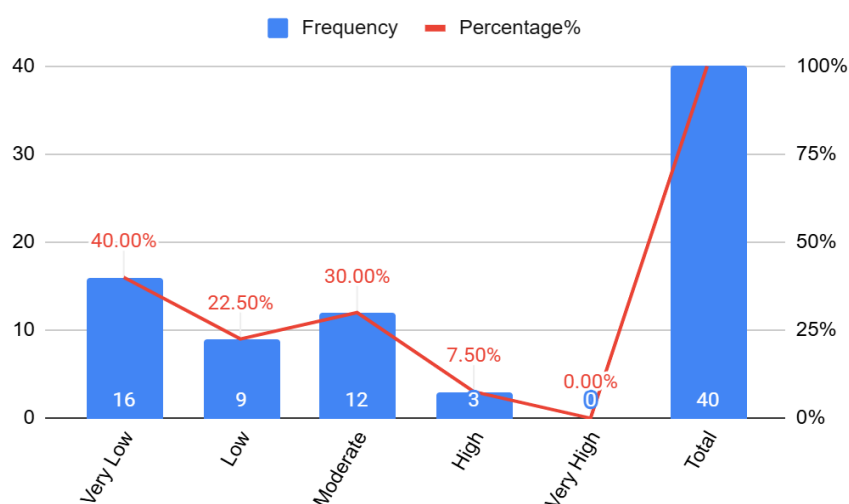
As indicated in Figure 3.1, the majority (90%) reported having studied English for eight (8) years. Smaller percentages indicated studying English for one (1) year (2.5%), nine (9) years (2.5%), and ten (10) years (5%).

Section Two: Global Awareness of SDGs

Question Four: How would you rate your knowledge of SDGs?

Figure 3. 2

Students' Level of SDGs Knowledge

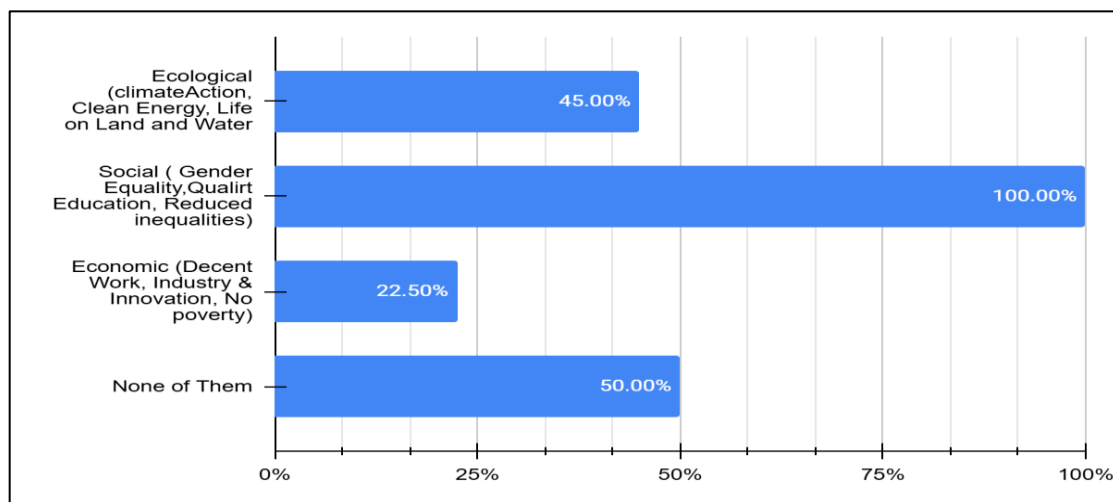


In the fifth question students were asked to rate their knowledge of SDGs. Among the freshmen (40%) reported having a “Very Low” level of knowledge about the SDGs. This shows that a large part of the undergraduate participants feel they have almost no understanding of global sustainability goals. (22.5%) rated their knowledge as “Low”, suggesting that a considerable number of students still have only limited familiarity with the SDGs. Meanwhile, (30%) reported having a “Moderate” understanding. This could be the result of new or updated curricula that include some exposure to sustainability themes, as well as personal efforts and interests in media, news, politics, and related areas. Only (7.5%) rated their knowledge as “High”, and none of the freshmen selected “Very High”. Thus, most first-year students demonstrate a limited awareness of the SDGs which suggests limited familiarity with the concept.

Question Five: Which of the following areas of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are you most familiar with?

Figure 3. 3

Students' Familiarity with the Areas of the SDGs



As it is demonstrated in Figure 3.3, among the freshmen, social sustainability, including Gender Equality, Quality Education, and Reduce Inequalities, was the most recognized area, with (100%) indicating familiarity. This suggests that social issues are more prominent in the awareness of undergraduate students. Ecological goals, such as Climate Action, Clean Energy and Life on Land & Water, were recognized by (40%), showing that while some students are aware of environmental issues, it is less emphasized compared to social sustainability. Economic sustainability, including goals like Decent Work, Industry & Innovation, and No Poverty, was the least familiar to freshmen, with only (22.5%) reporting knowledge in this area. Additionally, (50%) indicated that they were not familiar with any of the SDG areas, highlighting a significant gap in their understanding of global sustainability challenges.

Question Six: Do you think promoting awareness of SDGs is important for global sustainability? (Global sustainability means) maintaining a long-term balance between environmental protection, economic development, and social well-being

Figure 3. 4

Students' Perceptions on the Importance of Promoting Awareness of SDGs for Achieving Global Sustainability

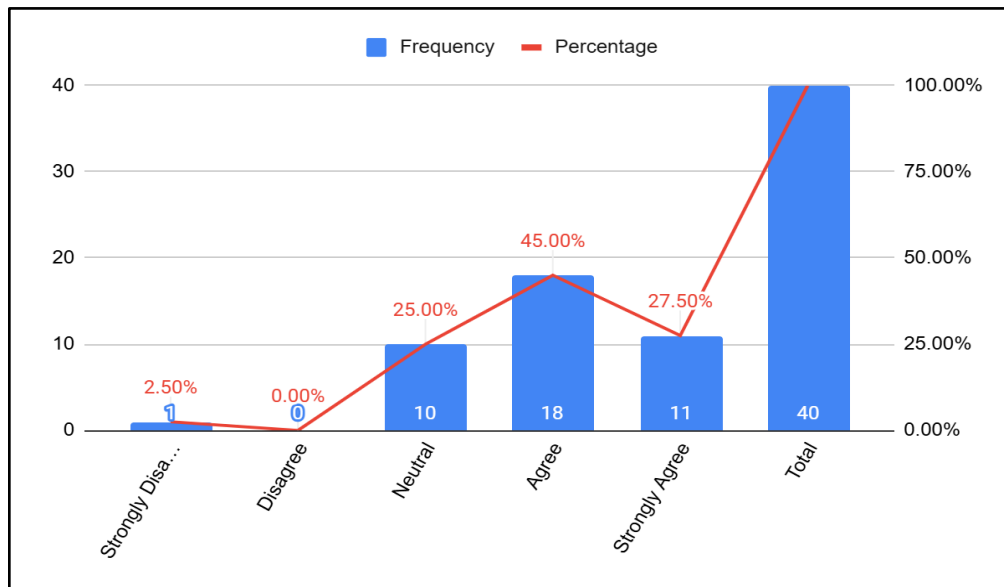


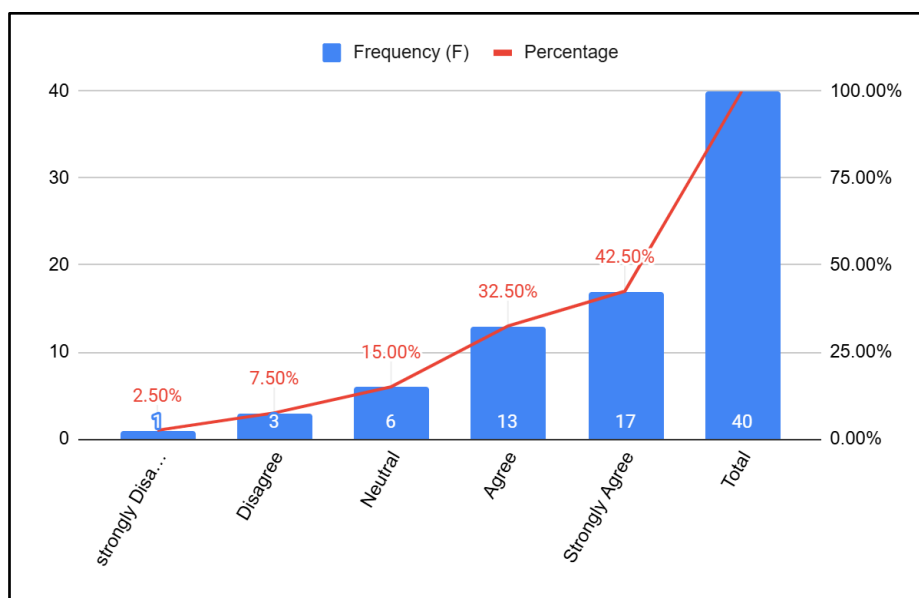
Figure 3.2. shows the students' responses regarding the importance of promoting awareness of the SDGs for global sustainability. A small percentage (2.5%) strongly disagreed with the statement. This suggests that only a minimal portion of the group rejects the idea. Meanwhile, (25%) of students were neutral. This reflects a lack of strong opinion on the issue. Possibly because sustainability topics have not yet been thoroughly introduced in their level of study. The majority, however, showed positive attitudes towards the importance of SDGs. About (45%) agreed, and (27.5%) strongly agreed.

This highlights that many learners, even at an early stage in their academic journey, recognize the relevance of global sustainability efforts. This may be due to basic exposure to global issues through general education courses, social media, or public campaigns. However, it is also possible that freshmen participants, being less familiar with questionnaires and data collection processes, may have provided some inaccurate or inconsistent responses. Overall, the data reveal that a majority of those students support the promotion of SDGs awareness, though some remain unsure or unconvinced.

Question Seven: Do you believe that learning the language plays a role in spreading awareness of SDGs?

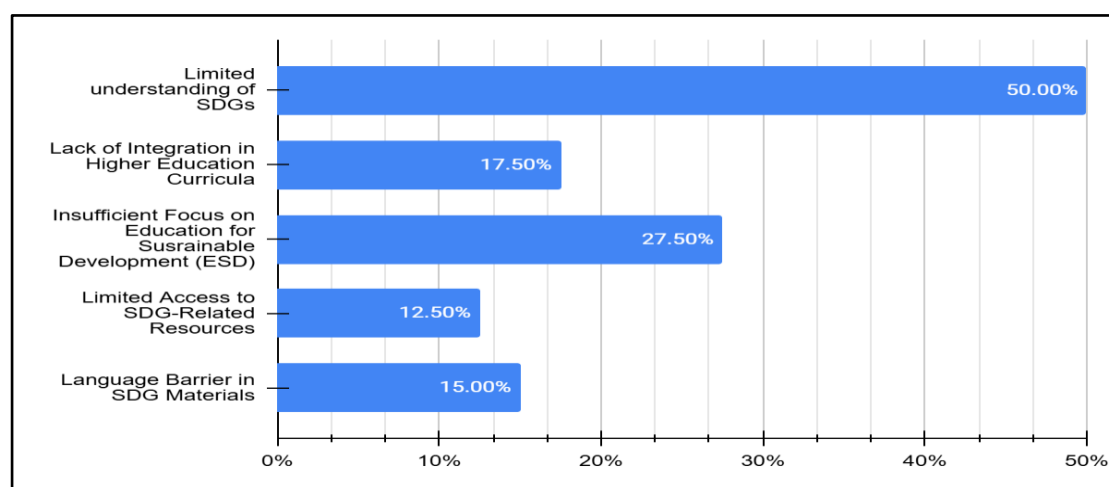
Figure 3. 5

Students' Perceptions on the Role of Language Learning in Spreading Awareness of SDG



The results observed in figure 3.5 highlight that there is a notable propensity toward agreement. A total of 32.5% of students agreed that learning the language is important for spreading awareness of SDGs, while 42.5% strongly agreed with this statement. This suggests that students recognize the potential of English language learning as a tool for fostering awareness of global issues. However, 15% of students expressed a more neutral stance, indicating that while they may see some connection between language learning and SDG awareness, they are unsure about the extent of that influence. On the other hand, a smaller proportion of students disagreed (7.5%) or strongly disagreed (2.5) which may point to those who either do not see a direct link or feel that learning English does not necessarily lead to greater awareness of sustainability issues.

Question Eight: What are the challenges that you face when increasing your awareness of SDGs?

Figure 3. 6*Challenges Faced by Students in Increasing Awareness of the SDGs*

Question nine aimed to identify the main obstacles students encounter when trying to enhance their awareness of the SDGs. First year students mainly identified a limited understanding of the global goals as the main obstacle (50%). This implies that many students at this level are not yet familiar with the goals or their significance. The lack of focus on ESD reported by (27.5%) reinforces this. It means that sustainability topics are either underrepresented or not clearly emphasized in the early stages of their university studies. In the same vein, some respondents (17.5%) pointed to the lack of integration of SDGs in their curriculum. On the other hand, (12.5%) reported limited access to related resources (12.5%). This highlights the need for better institutional support. Additionally, (15%) reported language barriers, which shows that understanding English-language materials may be a challenge for many in this group.

When students were asked to provide additional challenges when raising their awareness of SDGs, only two responded to the open-ended question. This reflects limited engagement and indicates a lack of interest in exploring additional challenges. One participant mentioned that a lack of motivation is a key barrier. This demonstrates the limited focus on SDGs within their current studies, or because the topic feels less relevant to their academic

experience. Without a clear connection to their coursework or personal goals, students may struggle to see the importance of engaging with sustainability issues.

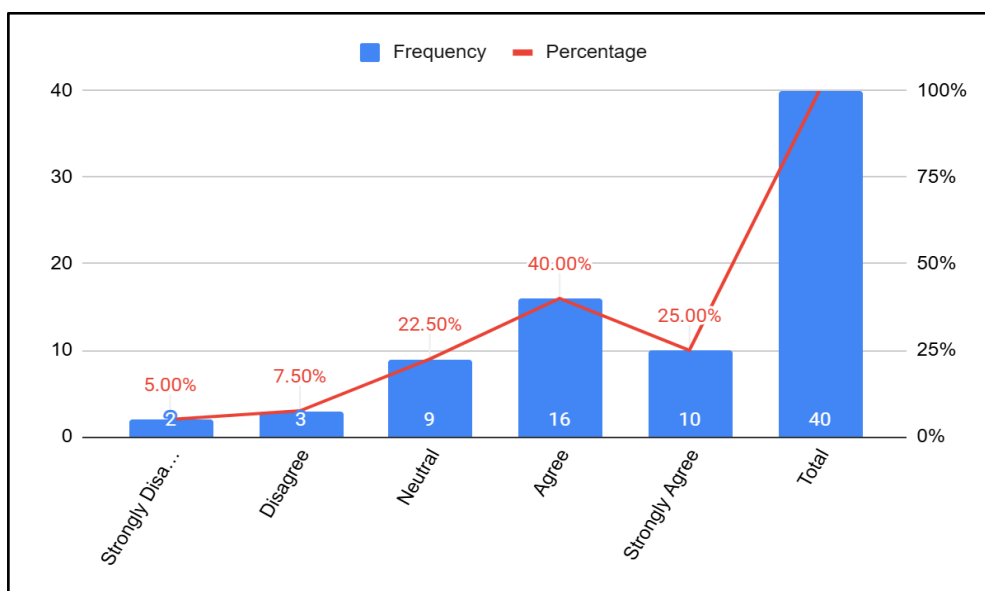
The other student mentioned unfamiliarity with academic research practices. This implies that as first-year students, they are still developing the skills necessary to find and evaluate research materials. This lack of experience could make it harder for them to engage meaningfully with SDG-related content. These responses suggest that freshmen may face challenges related to both motivation and academic readiness, which could affect their engagement with the SDGs.

Section Three: The Role of Learning EFL in Enhancing Global Awareness of SDGs

Question Nine: Has learning English helped you understand global issues, including SDGs?

Figure 3. 7

Students' Perceptions on the Role of English Learning in Promoting their Awareness of SDGs



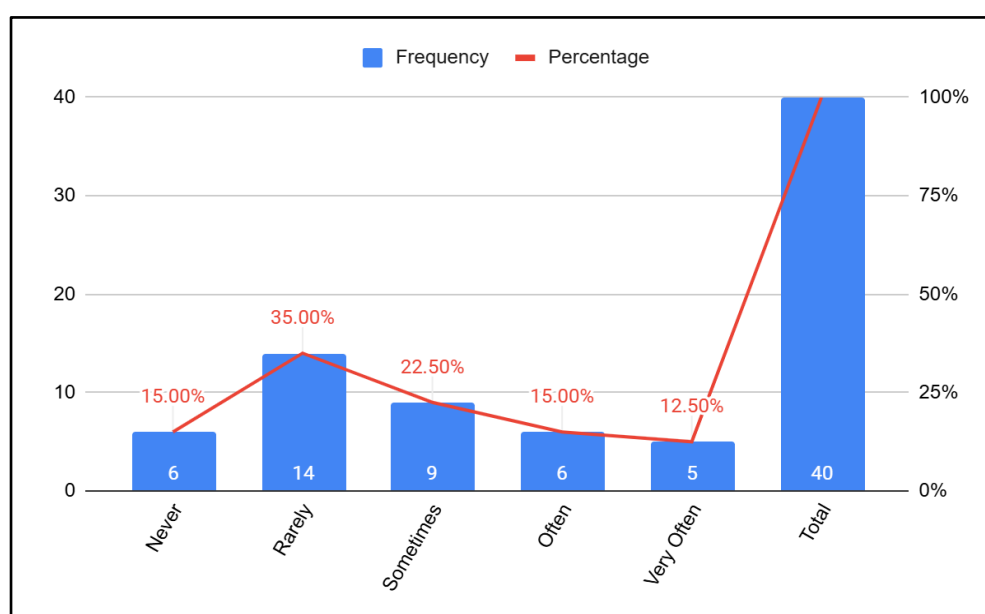
As it is demonstrated in figure 3.7, the majority of freshmen seem to feel that learning English has positively impacted their understanding of global issues. A substantial 40% of them agree, and 25% strongly agree with the statement. This suggests that they view English as a

useful tool in broadening their awareness of issues like SDGs. However, 22.5% of students selected “Neutral,” which may imply that they see some connection between language learning and global issues, but they do not feel it is a significant factor. The relatively smaller percentage of students who disagreed (7.5%) or strongly disagreed (5%) might indicate that a few students either have not found a direct link between English learning and their awareness of global challenges or have not had the opportunity to explore such themes in their courses.

Question Ten: How often do you come across SDG-related content in the English language?

Figure 3. 8

Students' Frequency of Encountering SDG-Related Content in English Language Contexts



The results show that first year students' exposure to SDG-related content in English is relatively limited. (15%) reported that they never encounter such material. This indicates that a notable segment of students remains completely disconnected from sustainability topics in any English-language context. Another (35%) said they rarely do. This implies that over one-third of the group has only minimal engagement with the global challenges in English.

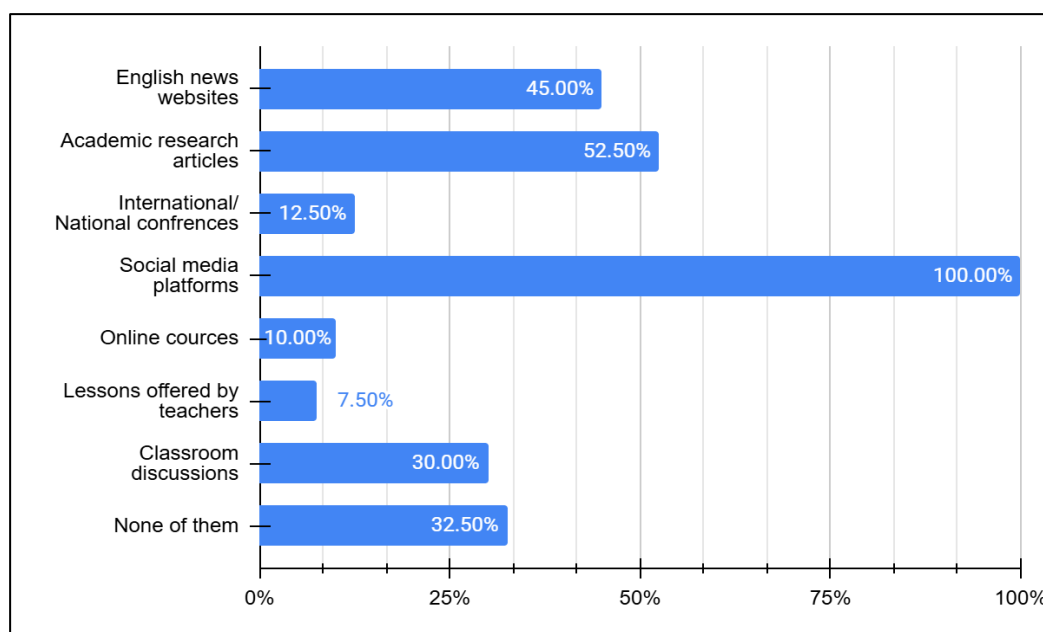
In addition, just over one-fifth (22.5%) indicated they sometimes come across SDG content in this language. Such occasional exposure may not be enough to develop a solid

understanding. Besides, only (15%) encounter it often, and only 12.5% very often. This means that just a small minority are regularly exposed to such content. This may reflect broader issues, such as limited access to English-language sources that deal with sustainability, or a lack of interest or awareness of such topics in their personal information habits.

Question Eleven: Which sources have exposed you to SDG-related content in English?

Figure 3. 9

The Sources Exposing Students to SDG-Related Content in the English Language



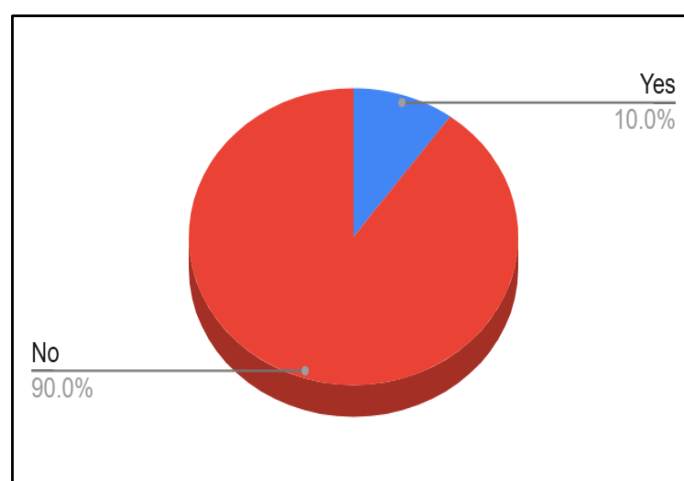
The data indicates that this group primarily rely on social media platforms for exposure to SDG-related content, with (100%) reflecting this preference. Academic research articles were the second most common source, mentioned by (52.5%). English news websites were cited by (45%), indicating moderate interaction with international current events. Classroom discussions were reported by (30%), while international and national conferences had a limited impact, with only (12.5%) identifying them as sources. Formal academic settings played a minimal role; only (10%) noted online courses, and just (7.5%) reported lessons offered by

teachers. Notably, (32.5%) stated they had not encountered SDG-related content through any of the listed sources, highlighting a gap in structured SDG education at the undergraduate level.

Question Twelve: Do your teachers mention the concept of SDGs in their lessons or discussions?

Figure 3. 10

Teachers Use of SDGs Concept in the Classroom

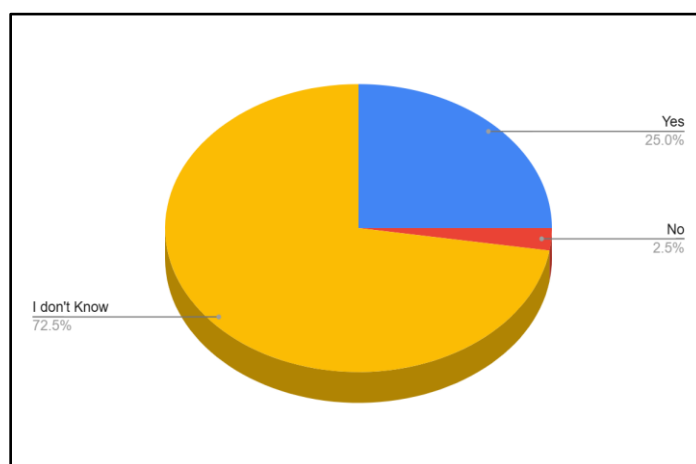


As shown in table 3.10, the majority of freshmen (90%) indicated that their teachers do not mention the concept of SDGs in their lessons or discussions. Only 10% stated that their teachers do refer to SDGs in their class. This reveals that sustainability topics are not commonly integrated into the English language curriculum for LMD students. This highlights a significant gap in exposure to these global issues in their educational experience. For those who answered with yes seemed to misunderstand the question. Several of them mentioned high school courses. This demonstrates that for this category of students, any exposure to SDGs may have occurred earlier in their education rather than being part of their academic experience.

Question Thirteen: Do you think EFL courses should integrate SDG-related topics to increase awareness among students?

Figure 3.11

Students' Opinions on Integrating SDG-Related Topics into EFL Courses to Raise Awareness

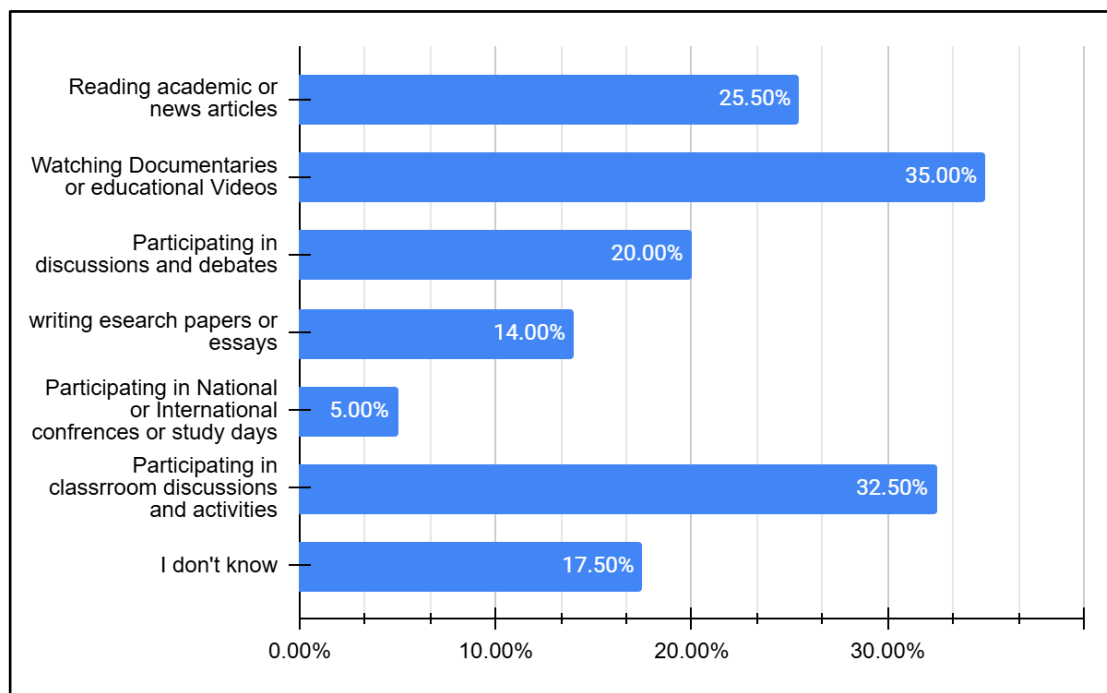


The data in Figure 3.11, reveals distinct differences in the participants' responses regarding whether EFL courses should integrate SDG-related content to increase awareness among students. A small portion (25%) expressed support for integrating SDGs into their courses, while only (2.5%) opposed this idea. The majority of first-year LMD students, however, were unsure, with (72.5%) selecting “I don’t know”. This suggests that many undergraduates may not fully recognize the potential value of incorporating SDG-related content into their EFL courses, or they may lack enough knowledge to construct a clear opinion.

Question Fourteen: Which aspects of EFL learning do you think are most effective in promoting SDG awareness?

Figure 3. 12

Students' Perceptions of the Most Effective Aspects of EFL Learning in Promoting SDG Awareness

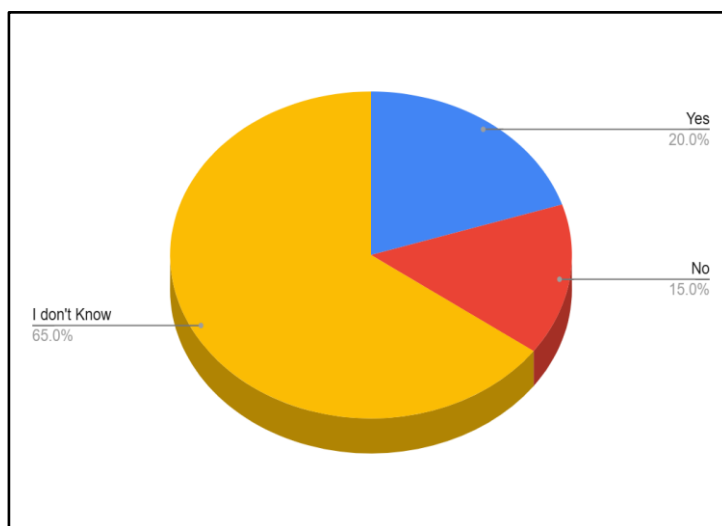


As it is noticeable in Figure 3.12, freshmen identified a variety of EFL learning aspects as effective in promoting SDG awareness. The most frequently selected method was watching documentaries or educational videos (35%). This higher portion was followed closely by participating in classroom discussions and activities (32.5%). These responses suggest that visual and interactive learning experiences are perceived as particularly impactful for this group. Reading academic or news articles was chosen by (27.5%). This shows a fair appreciation for reading-based exposure to global issues. Meanwhile, participating in discussions and debates (20%), and writing research papers or essays (15%) were less frequently selected. This indicates a lower emphasis on verbal or written critical engagement. Moreover, only (5%) selected participation in conferences or study days. This reflects limited access to such events. Notably, (17.5%) of students responded with “I don’t Know”. This points to uncertainty or a lack of clarity about how EFL learning connects to SDG awareness.

Question Fifteen: Has learning English made it easier for you to participate in SDG-related discussions, projects, or initiatives?

Figure 3. 13

Students' Perception of the Role of Learning English in Facilitating the Participation in SDG-Related Discussions, Projects, or Initiatives



According to the data displayed in figure 3.13, the responses from freshmen regarding whether learning has made it easier for them to participate in SDG-related discussions, projects, or initiatives show varying levels of awareness and engagement. Among the first year LMD students, only (20%) felt that learning English had helped them to participate in such activities. In contrast, (15%) said it had not, while a significant portion, (65%), selected “I don’t know”. This high level of uncertainty may reflect a lack of direct experience or awareness of how English skills might contribute to their involvement in SDG-related efforts.

Question Sixteen: How do you think EFL teachers or curriculum developers could integrate SDG topics into English lessons?

This question aims to explore students’ perspectives on how EFL teachers and curriculum developers could integrate SDG topics into English language instruction. Regarding the freshmen, participation was relatively limited. Only 8 out of 40 participants responded to the question. This shows a low level of SDG awareness and limited ability to propose integration strategies. Most students proposed basic methods such as: incorporating “reading and listening activities”, engaging in “classroom discussions”, and utilizing “SDG-themed

content” as part of English lessons. A few responses suggested more structured initiatives, such as: developing a dedicated “module that discussed SDG topics”. Nevertheless, a significant portion of students expressed uncertainty regarding the topic. One of the participants simply noted “I don’t know”, and another admitted “My knowledge about SDGs is close to none, so I don’t feel capable of giving a rich answer”. In the light of this, the limited awareness reflected in their responses underscores the clear need for earlier exposure to SDGs in the curriculum.

Question Seventeen: Do you have any suggestions for improving the role of EFL in promoting SDG awareness?

This question aims to gather the diverse perspectives and suggestions of first-year LMD students, resulting in several practical recommendations for integrating SDG awareness into EFL courses. These students emphasized the importance of developing specialized vocabulary related to sustainability and incorporating SDG topics into various language skills. Suggestions included using SDGs as themes for reading, listening, speaking, and writing exercises. There was also an emphasis on project-based learning (PBL), where students could collaborate on SDG-related tasks like creating presentations or campaigns. A few students proposed the use of real-world materials like news, documentaries, and podcasts, to build both language skills and awareness about global issues. However, the responses also revealed a lack of clear suggestions from some students, with some indicating that they had “no idea” or felt that they didn’t have enough knowledge to provide concrete recommendations.

3.3. Analysis of Master 2 students' Questionnaire

Question One: What is your age?

Table 3. 3

Students' Age

Age Range	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
17-20	0	0%
21-25	38	95%
26 years and above	2	5%
Total	40	100%

The results indicate that the majority of master students (95%) are aged between 21 and 25. This highlights that most respondents are within the typical age range for postgraduate students. A small portion (5%) are 26 years old or above. Notably, there are no participants under the age of 21.

Question Two: What is your gender?

Table 3. 4

Students' Gender

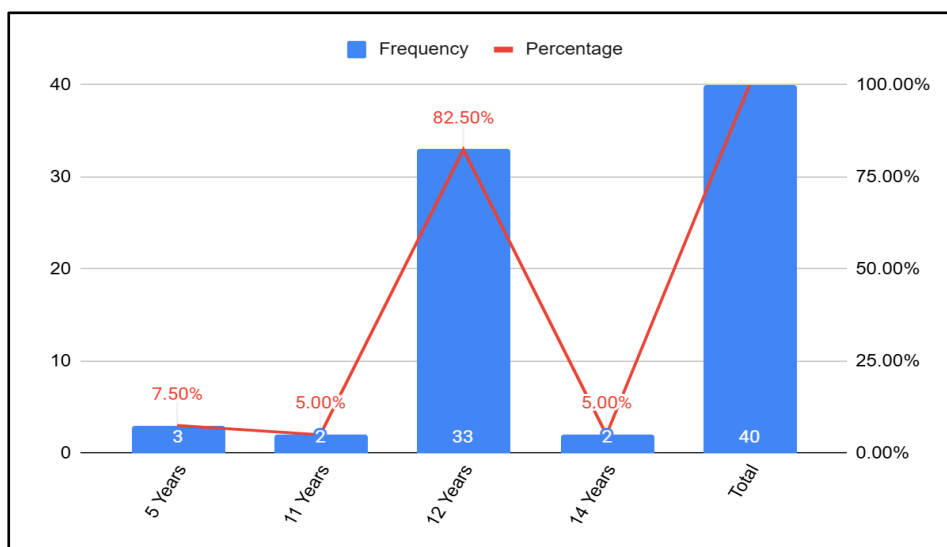
Gender	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Male	7	17.5%
Female	33	82.5%
Total	40	100%

In the Master Two group, the gender distribution remains predominantly female, though slightly more balanced. Specifically, (82.5%) identify as female, while (17.5%) identify as male.

Question Three: How many years have you been studying English (including this year)?

Figure 3. 14

Students' Years of Studying English



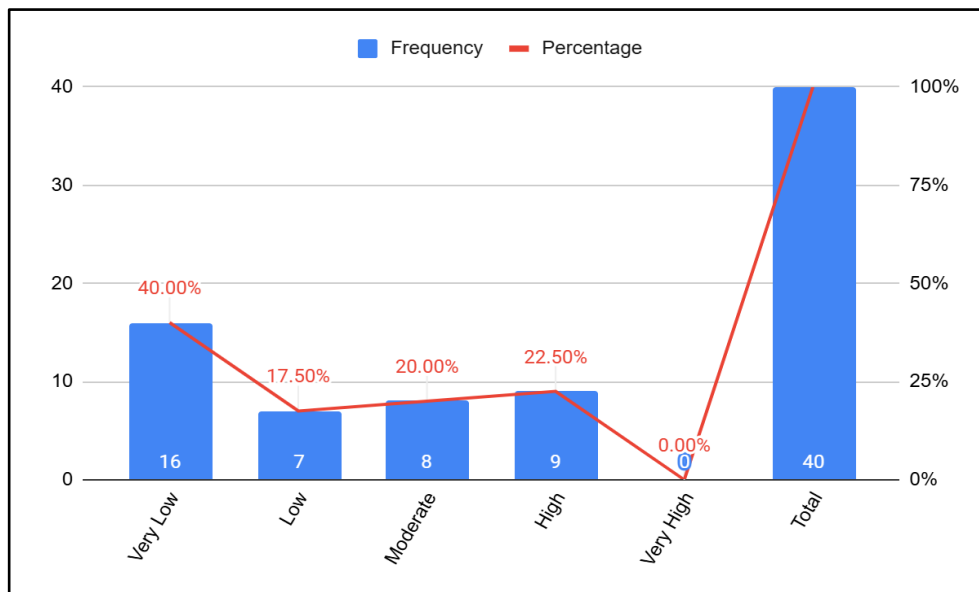
Among the Master Two students, the majority (82.5%) reported having studied English for 12 years, reflecting extended exposure to the language. Additionally, (7.5%) reported 5 years, (5%) reported 11 years, and another (5%) reported 14 years of studying English.

Section Two: Global Awareness of SDGs

Question Four: How would you rate your knowledge of SDGs?

Figure 3. 15

Students' Level of SDGs Knowledge

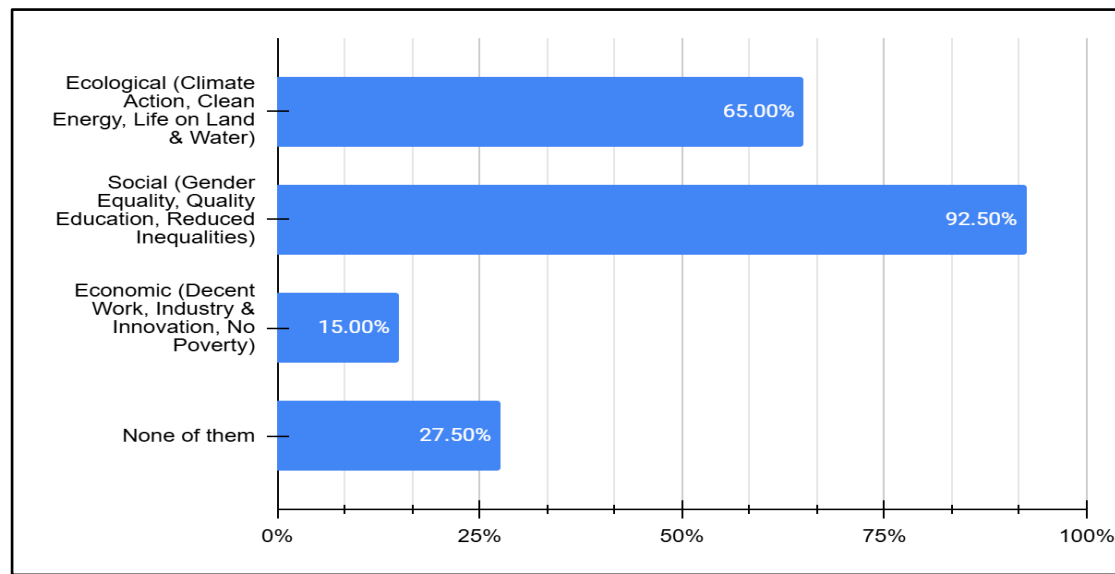


The results obtained show that (40%) rated their knowledge of the SDGs as “Very Low”. This indicates that many of them feel unfamiliar with sustainability-related topics. A further (17.5%) considered their understanding to be “Low”. They believe that their awareness is limited. In contrast, (20%) described their knowledge as “Moderate”, suggesting that only a smaller portion of students have been exposed to SDG concepts in a meaningful way. Notably, (22.5%) rated their knowledge as “High”. This portion reflects a more confident self-assessment, possibly influenced by advanced academic engagement such as research or coursework. However, no students selected the “Very High” option. This indicates that even at this level, learners do not feel fully informed about the SDGs. In sum, the responses reveal a varied but generally modest level of awareness. While the majority reported limited knowledge, only a minority expressed confidence in their understanding.

Question Five: Which of the following areas of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are you most familiar with?

Figure 3. 16

Students' Familiarity with the Areas of the SDGs

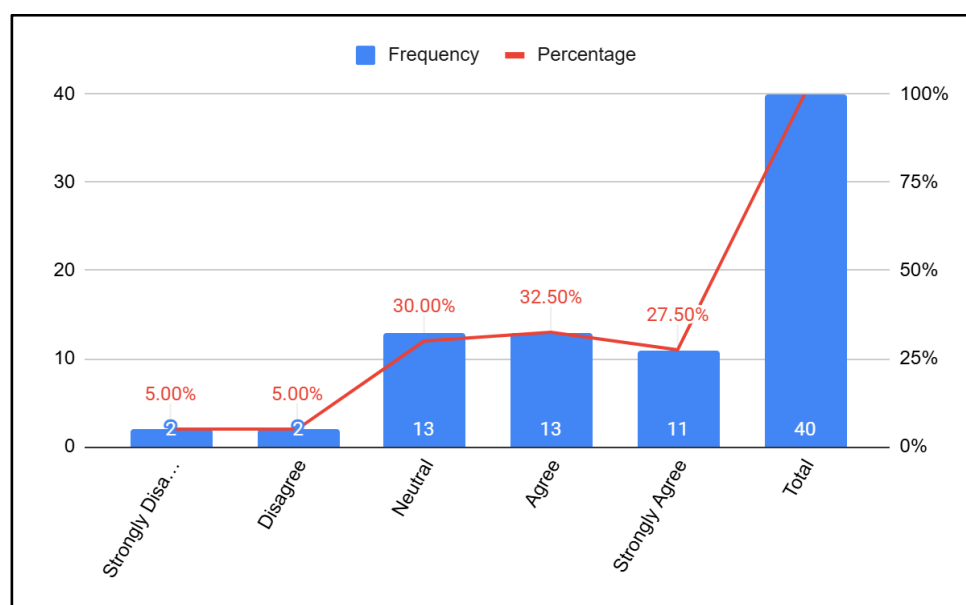


As indicated in Figure 3.16, there was a strong recognition of social sustainability, with (92.5%) identifying with goals related to education, equality, and overall well-being. However, ecological sustainability was also recognized by a higher proportion of Master students (65%), reflecting a greater awareness of environmental challenges. In contrast, economic sustainability was the least familiar, with only (15%) reporting familiarity in this area, suggesting that economic dimensions of the SDGs may receive less emphasis in their academic context. Additionally, (27.5%) in the second year master reported no familiarity with any SDG area, which may indicate that, despite their advanced academic level, some students have had limited exposure to sustainability-related content. This highlights the importance of embedding SDG themes more consistently across the curriculum to ensure that all students, regardless of their interests, develop a well-rounded comprehension of global sustainability issues.

Question Six: Do you think promoting awareness of SDGs is important for global sustainability?

Figure 3. 17

Students' Perceptions on the Importance of Promoting Awareness of SDGs for Achieving Global Sustainability

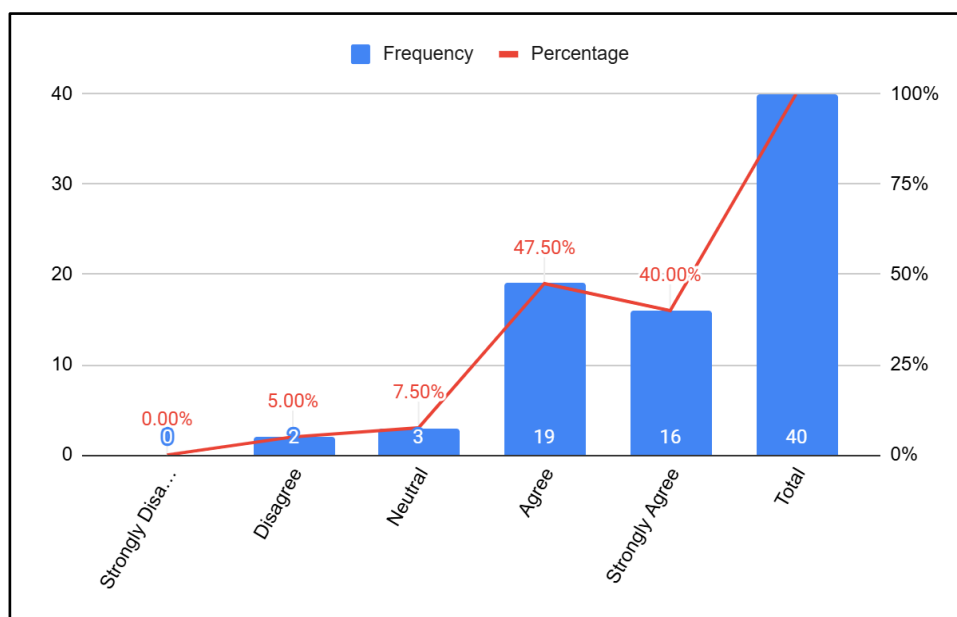


In response to the question, senior students expressed a range of views across the Likert scale. A small percentage (5%) strongly disagreed, and another (5%) disagreed. This implies that a few students do not recognize the importance of SDGs awareness. A larger portion of the respondents (32.5%) agreed, while (27.5%) strongly agreed. This shows that many of Master 2 students recognize the critical role of SDGs awareness in fostering global sustainability. This positive response may be attributed to their advanced level of study, which likely includes more engagement through research, seminars, or specialised coursework. In contrast, (30%) of the participants were neutral. This indicates that those participants may question the practical impact of awareness in promoting global sustainability.

Question Seven: Do you believe that learning the language plays a role in spreading awareness of SDGs?

Figure 3. 18

Students' Perceptions on the Role of Language Learning in Spreading Awareness of SDGs



Senior students showed a strong consensus on the matter, with (47.5%) agreeing and (40%) strongly agreeing that language learning contributes to spreading SDG awareness. Interestingly, no students in the Master's group strongly disagreed with the statement, and only (5%) disagreed. A small percentage (7.5%) remained neutral, suggesting that most students in this group recognize the value of English as a medium for engaging with global sustainability issues, even if their personal views differ slightly on the overall impact. The lack of strong disagreement in the Master's group might reflect the higher level of academic exposure to global issues in their program, potentially giving them more insight into the broader role of language in awareness-building.

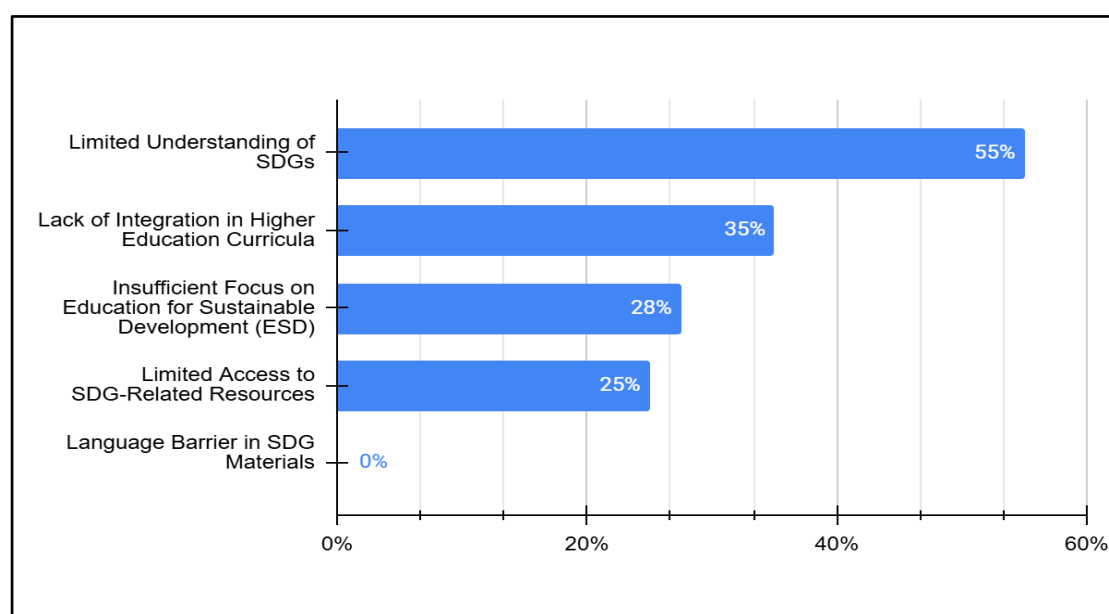
The lack of strong disagreement in the master's responses suggests that most students in this group recognize the value of English as a medium for engaging with global sustainability issues. Rather than simply reflecting academic exposure, this response pattern may indicate that

these students perceive a stronger alignment between language learning and global challenges. Their advanced level of study could mean they are more attuned to how language skills intersect with international collaborations tied to sustainability, making the link feel more practically relevant to them.

Question Eight: What are the challenges that you face when increasing your awareness of SDGs?

Figure 3. 19

Challenges Faced by Students in Increasing Awareness of SDGs



As shown in figure 3.19, the most frequent challenge was a limited understanding of the SDGs (55%). This means familiarity with the goals is limited among students, even though they have reached an advanced stage of their academic journey. Besides, (35%) noted that the SDGs are not well integrated into their curriculum. This may be because of their academic experience which enables them to recognize and evaluate the structure and content of their programs. This possibly reflects their expectations for more advanced content. Furthermore, a total of (27.5%) of Master's students indicated a lack of focus on ESD. This shows that sustainability topics are not sufficiently emphasized across different subject areas. (25%) pointed to limited access to

SDG- related resources which could hinder independent learning or research on the topic. Moreover, none of them reported facing language barriers which highlights a general ease with understanding academic texts in English.

Regarding the open-ended question that asks students to identify additional challenges, only three responses were provided. This reflects limited engagement overall and suggests that students are not actively attempting to raise their awareness of the SDGs. One student mentioned the impact of social media on students' ability to learn about the SDGs. Many seniors noted that while platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter can rapidly disseminate valuable information about sustainability initiatives. They are likely to circulate unverified or distorted content. These insights imply embedding digital literacy into EFL classrooms. In other words, it is required to teach students not only English skills, but also how to critically assess online information and recognize trustworthy channels for SDG related knowledge.

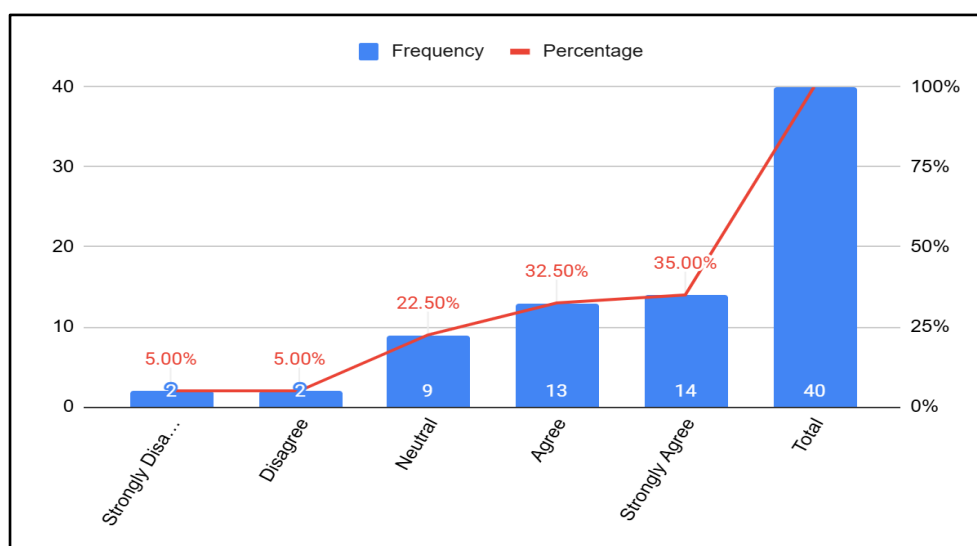
Another participant pointed out societal and cultural differences as a challenge. This suggests that community values, norms, and priorities may influence students' engagement with global issues like SDGs. For instance, some communities may place strong emphasis on nature and environment preservation. On the other hand, others might focus more on immediate socio-economic concerns, making global sustainability goals seem less relevant or urgent. Finally, a third student highlighted the absence of institutional support. This indicates that universities often lack formal programs or events to promote SDGs awareness. Despite the small number of responses, the insights provided offer valuable perspectives on the barriers to SDG awareness.

Section Three: The Role of Learning EFL in Enhancing Global Awareness of SDGs

Question Nine: Has learning English helped you understand global issues, including SDGs?

Figure 3. 20

Students' Perceptions on the Role of English Learning in Promoting their Awareness of SDGs



As pointed out in figure 3.20, the responses from second-year master students regarding the role of English in understanding global issues were notably diverse. While (32.5%) agreed and (35%) strongly agreed that English learning has helped them engage with global topics, the response distribution suggests a varying degree of impact. Additionally, (22.5%) of second-year master students selected the “Neutral” option, indicating some uncertainty or indifference about the relationship between English proficiency and their awareness of global issues.

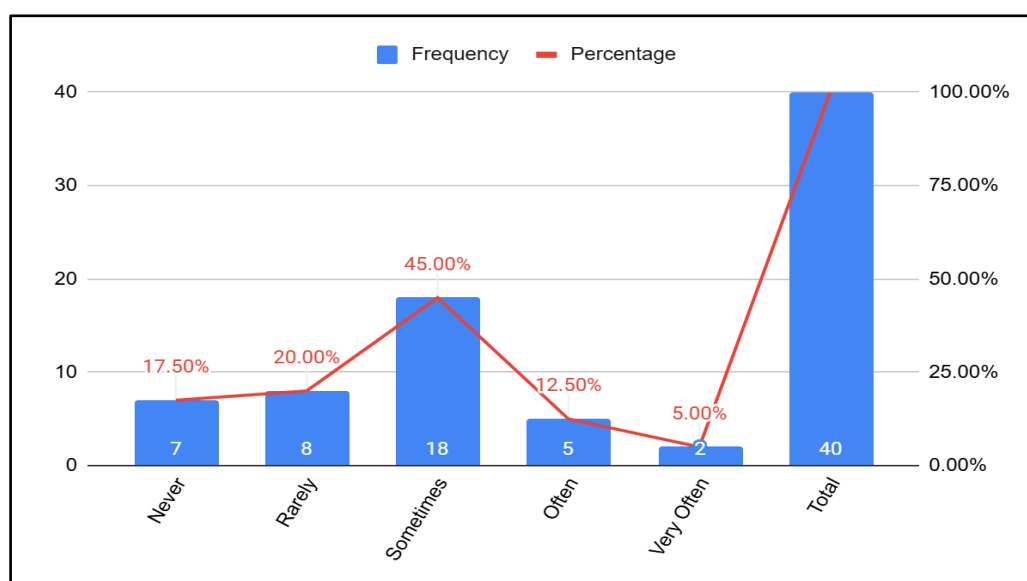
Interestingly, the (5%) of students who disagreed and (5%) strongly disagreed suggest that, for some students, English may not be perceived as a significant factor in their understanding of SDGs. This could be due to their advanced academic level, where their focus on specialized knowledge in the field of Learning English as a Foreign Language may overshadow the role of English in addressing global issues. For some students, English may not be perceived as a significant factor in their understanding of SDGs. This perception could

be shaped by the specific content covered in courses, particularly civilization, literature, and culture. Such courses often foreground global themes and sociopolitical contexts, potentially shaping how students connect language learning with broader global awareness.

Question Ten: How often do you come across SDG-related content in the English language?

Figure 3. 21

Students' Frequency of Encountering SDG-Related Content in English Language Contexts



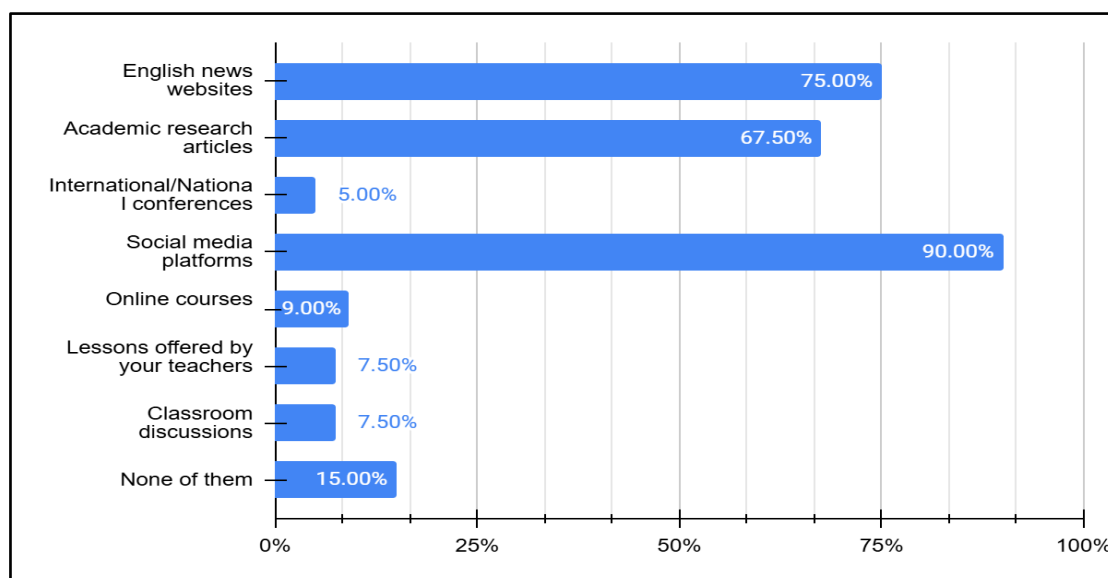
The responses to this question reveal that the participants have a moderate but inconsistent level of exposure. A significant portion (45%) said they sometimes come across related material. This suggests occasional engagement that may arise through academic tasks, media, or independent exploration. However, only a small portion reported regular exposure. (12.5%) stated that they often encounter it, and just (5%) encounter it very often. This implies that structured or sustained interaction with SDG themes in English remains limited. On the other hand, (17.5%) of students said they never come across SDG content in English, while (20%) said they rarely do. This highlights that over one-third of the respondents have minimal or no engagement with sustainability-related material in the language. In general, the findings

point to a noticeable gap in consistent access or attention to SDG issues in English-language contexts, even at the graduate level.

Question Eleven: Which sources have exposed you to SDG-related content in English?

Figure 3. 22

The Sources Exposing Students to SDG-Related Content in the English Language

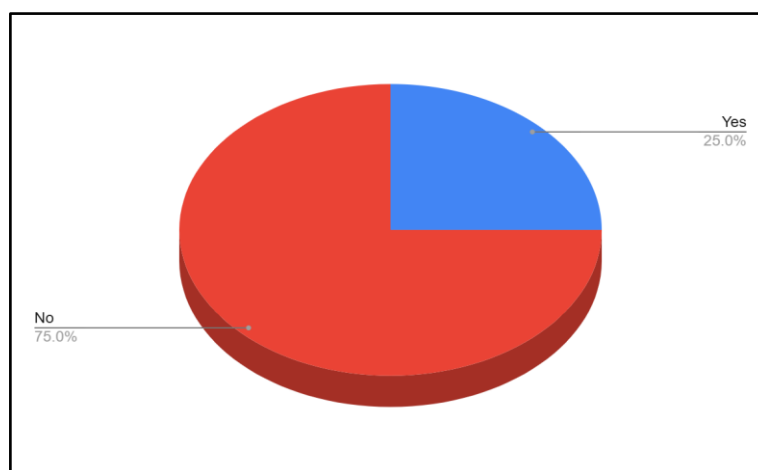


The results observed in figure 3.22, demonstrate that social media emerged as the most common source of SDG-related content, with (90%). Academic research and articles were cited by (67.5%), indicating stronger utilization of scholarly resources. English news websites were more prominent in this group, with (75%) reporting them as a source, reflecting greater interest in global media and current affairs. Classroom discussions (7.5%) and lessons offered by teachers (7.5%) were infrequently cited, as were international and national conferences (5%). Importantly, no Master Two students (0%) reported learning about SDGs through online courses. Only (15%) indicated no exposure to SDG content from any source.

Question Twelve: Do your teachers mention the concept of SDGs in their lessons or discussions?

Figure 3. 23

The Use of SDGs Concept in the Classroom



Question thirteen aims to discover whether the teachers mention the concept of SDGs in their lessons or discussions. The results show a moderate level of exposure to SDG-related content, with (25%) stating that their teachers mention the SDGs during lessons or discussions. However, (75%) of them indicated that such content is not included in their language classes. This denotes that while a portion of the students are exposed to sustainability themes, the vast majority still lack regular engagement with SDGs in their educational experience. It's possible that some teachers may personally value sustainability and choose to include SDG-related discussions or materials, even if it's not officially part of the syllabus.

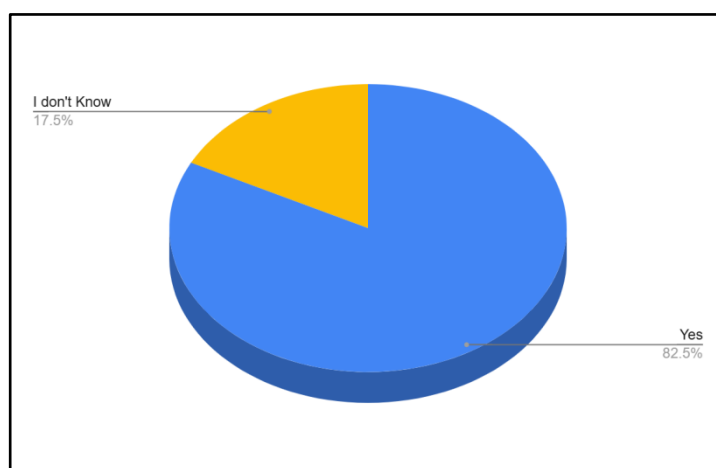
For those who answered “yes”, they were asked about the courses or modules in which SDGs are mentioned. The seniors mainly referred to discussions rather than formal courses. This implies that for Master’s students, SDGs may be introduced more informally through class discussions rather than structured lessons. In addition, some other students suggested that study days provide opportunities for these discussions. Due to their higher academic level, they are

likely more aware of such events. This contributes to their exposure to SDG-related topics outside the formal curriculum.

Question Thirteen: Do you think EFL courses should integrate SDG-related topics to increase awareness among students?

Figure 3. 24

Students' Opinions on Integrating SDG-Related Topics into EFL Courses to Raise their Awareness

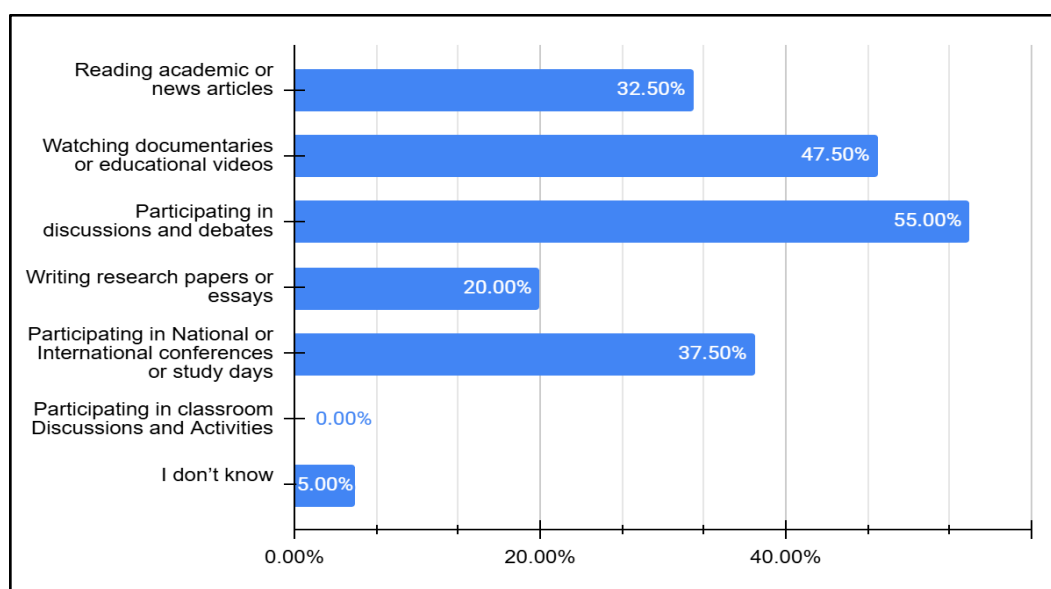


As displayed in figure 3.24, students seem to have a strong preference for integrating SDGs into EFL courses. A significant (82.5%) of master students responded with “Yes”, expressing support for the idea of including SDG-related topics to raise awareness. Notably, no Master students selected the “No” option, indicating an anonymous agreement among this group that SDGs should be part of the curriculum. However, a small portion of master students (17.5%) remained uncertain, selecting “I don’t know”, which reflects some degree of indecision.

Question Fourteen: Which aspects of EFL learning do you think are most effective in promoting SDG awareness?

Figure 3. 25

Students' Perceptions of the Most Effective Aspects of EFL Learning in Promoting SDG Awareness

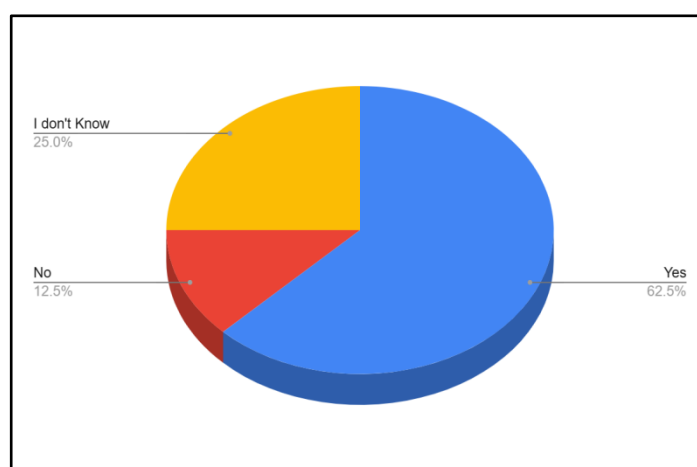


The results showed a strong preference for interactive and critical engagement methods. The most common response was participating in discussions and debates (55%). This highlights a greater emphasis on communicative and reflective learning. This was followed by watching documentaries or educational videos (47.5%), and participating in conferences or study days (37.5%). The data suggest a wider exposure to advanced academic events and audiovisual resources. Additionally, reading academic or news articles was selected by (32.5%). This indicates that reading remains a valued method for gaining insight into SDG topics. Nevertheless, fewer students chose writing research papers or essays (20%). Additionally, none selected classroom discussions and activities. This reflects a shift in instructional focus at the master level. Only (5%) responded with “I don’t Know”. The portion suggests a clear awareness of the connection between EFL learning and SDG promotion.

Question Fifteen: Has learning English made it easier for you to participate in SDG-related discussions, projects, or initiatives?

Figure 3. 26

Students' Perception of the Role of Learning English in Facilitating the Participation in SDG-Related Discussions, Projects, or Initiatives



For the seniors, there was a more balanced response, with (62.5%) acknowledging that learning English had facilitated their participation in SDG-related discussions or projects. Only (12.5%) disagreed, stating that English had not made a difference. Though, (25%) selected “I don’t know”, suggesting some degree of uncertainty or lack of clarity regarding the role of English proficiency in SDG engagement.

Question Sixteen: How do you think EFL teachers or curriculum developers could integrate SDG topics into English lessons?

Master students demonstrated a high degree of engagement and offered a wide range of sophisticated strategies. Their recommendations can be summarized as follows:

- Designing authentic writing tasks that “address real community issues, connecting English skills to civic engagement”.

- Integrating SDG content systematically “within EFL curricular and lessons to simultaneously promote language development and global awareness”.
- Encouraging project-based learning by “creating group projects related to SDG topics to foster collaboration and creativity”.
- Organizing debate classes and structured discussions to “explore the importance of SDGs within a real world framework”.
- Utilizing multimedia resources, such as “texts, videos, and songs related to SDG themes”.
- Developing interactive classroom learning through “quizzes and role-plays”.
- Promoting critical reflection and argumentative writing by “tasking students with writing essays on SDG related topics”

It is worth noting that even second-year master students who demonstrated limited prior knowledge or awareness of SDGs were still able to provide full responses. In addition, they could suggest practical methods for integrating SDG themes within the field of EFL. This indicates that, despite gaps in specific content knowledge. These learners possess a strong ability to transfer their pedagogical training and critical thinking skills toward global issues. Such findings reveal that EFL education, beyond its linguistic aims, plays a crucial role in shaping competent and globally conscious individuals ready to contribute meaningfully to their communities.

Question Seventeen: Do you have any suggestions for improving the role of EFL in promoting SDG awareness?

As it is obtained from the responses of the second-year master students, seniors offered more nuanced suggestions. Seniors seemed to place a stronger emphasis on collaborative learning, suggesting the idea of connecting with other classrooms internationally to discuss SDG issues and exchange ideas. Moreover, several students proposed using technology and

social media to enhance SDG awareness, including digital storytelling and encouraging students to engage with SDG-related content online. There was also a notable interest in teacher training. Suggestions included training teachers to integrate SDGs effectively into their lessons and encouraging teachers to create more contextualized learning experiences by linking global SDGs to local issues. Despite these contributions, some Master's students expressed uncertainty or lack of specific suggestions, stating that they felt they lacked the necessary ideas or knowledge to provide substantial input.

3.4. Comparison of Questionnaire Findings: Freshmen vs. Seniors

Before delving into the details, it is important to highlight two general observations. First, the freshmen were largely unfamiliar with the questionnaire and occasionally provided inconsistent or illogical responses. Second, the senior students showed greater exposure to the topic, though their understanding remained vague and lacked a clearly defined conceptual framework.

3.4.1. Similarities

The analysis of the questionnaire results revealed several key similarities between freshmen (Bachelor) and senior (Master) students. One prominent similarity that emerged is that both groups demonstrated a generally limited awareness of the SDGs. This was evident across their responses to questions 5, 6, and 9. In question 5, students from both academic levels commonly rated their knowledge as low or very low (57.5 vs. 62.5 %). Question 6 further supports this, as a considerable percentage of students in both groups reported unfamiliarity with all three core dimensions of sustainability (social, ecological, and economic).

The same question also highlighted similar patterns of familiarity across the three aspects. Both groups indicated greater awareness of social issues, followed by ecological, and the least recognition was given to economic sustainability. Finally, question 9 showed that participants from both groups share similar challenges in developing their awareness, with the

most frequently reported issue being a lack of foundational understanding of the SDGs. Specifically, 50% of the freshmen and 55% of the seniors identified this as the main obstacle. These results implied that limited awareness of the SDGs is a shared issue among students at different levels. This points out a broader issue. Namely, the limited integration of sustainability topics within the curriculum.

The lack of curricular emphasis is further underscored by the responses to questions 9, 12, and 13. Both groups reported insufficient focus on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), with 27.5% of freshmen and 27.5% of senior students identifying this matter (Q9). Additionally, only 27.5% of both freshmen and senior students said their teachers included the topic in class, showing that most students receive little formal instruction on it (Q9). Moreover, question 13 indicated that the majority of both groups stated that SDGs are not addressed in their English classes (90% of freshmen students and 75% of Master students).

The absence of structured instruction has made platforms like social media the primary source of information for learners from both academic levels. This trend is reflected in the findings from question 12, where 90% of master students and 100% of BA. learners selected social media as a key channel for learning about the SDGs. Interestingly, despite the limited understanding and lack of integration of the SDGs in the curriculum, students across academic levels recognized the significance of these global goals in global sustainability. Given that 72.65% of the graduate and 60% of the undergraduate agreed or strongly agreed upon the statement in question seven, it highlighted a shared awareness among the two groups.

3.4.2. Differences

A comparative analysis between freshmen and senior students points to both developmental and demographic shifts that occur throughout the academic progression. The age difference is expected, with younger students (17-20 years) entering the university system and older students (21-25 years) approaching the end of their postgraduate studies. However, the gender distribution offers a more nuanced insight: while both groups are predominantly female, the proportion of women is higher among first-year students (95%) than the master group (82.5%).

This shows that while women are the majority in both groups, there is a small increase in male participation at the master's level. Notably, the senior male students showed greater awareness of the role of English in engaging with global issues. This is supported by Yuan et al. (2021), who found that although male and female students may have similar levels of awareness regarding the SDGs, gender plays a role in how individuals prioritize and act upon this information, potentially influencing their level of engagement in higher academic pursuits related to global issues.

This demographic difference is reflected in the way both groups engage with and understand SDGs, as well as their views on the role of EFL in promoting SDG awareness. Freshmen tend to approach the SDGs with optimism, as shown in their responses. They were generally more positive about the role of EFL in SDG awareness without deeply questioning its actual impact. In contrast, seniors in their responses exhibited more critical thinking.

In question six (6), seniors demonstrate more critical thinking in their responses about the role of EFL in promoting SDG awareness. Unlike freshmen who were generally optimistic, seniors provided more nuanced views, questioning the effectiveness and challenges of EFL in raising awareness. Similarly, in question eight (8), when asked about the challenges in this

process, seniors highlighted concrete obstacles and complexities, reflecting a deeper critical engagement compared to the more positive and straightforward answers from freshmen.

A significant distinction between the two groups lies in language proficiency, which directly affects their ability to engage with SDG-related content. As seen in their responses to Question 9, freshmen students encounter challenges with language barriers (15%), making it harder for them to fully comprehend SDG resources. This limited proficiency can hinder their capacity to grasp the global sustainability issues. On the other hand, seniors with their advanced level of English proficiency and academic experience, 0% of Language Barriers in SDG Materials, show greater ability to engage with SDG-related content.

Furthermore, their answers to question 14, 15, and 16. In question 14, 87.5% of senior students agreed that English language learning can be an effective means of raising awareness about the SDGs, compared to only 65% of freshmen. Question 15 showed that 80% of seniors support integrating SDG-related content into English classes, compared to 60% of freshmen. Moreover, in question 16, seniors provided more nuanced responses, suggesting concrete examples of how SDG topics could be embedded in language lessons. A level of critical engagement that was mostly absent in the freshmen responses.

Moreover, in terms of awareness and involvement, seniors again show more familiarity with the SDGs. Responses to questions 16, 17, and 18 reflect their broader knowledge and higher levels of interaction with sustainability initiatives. This is likely due to their participation in academic discussions, research activities, and exposure to interdisciplinary content. Conversely, freshmen students often report no prior knowledge of the goals or limited interaction with SDG-related concepts, indicating that awareness builds progressively with academic advancement.

Overall, the analysis reveals both convergence and divergence in how freshmen and senior students engage with and perceive the SDGs. While both groups demonstrate a shared

lack of comprehensive awareness and cite limited curricular exposure to sustainability topics, their responses also reflect distinct developmental differences. Senior students, benefiting from greater academic experience and language proficiency, tend to exhibit deeper critical engagement and a more nuanced understanding of the SDGs and their relevance to EFL. In contrast, freshmen approach the topic with more optimism but less critical reflection. These findings underscore the need for a more integrated and progressive incorporation of SDG-related content within EFL instruction

3.5. Pedagogical Implications

This study explored the role of EFL in promoting global awareness of SDGs. The findings derived from the questionnaire distributed to freshmen and senior students reveal several important pedagogical implications for teachers, EFL learners, and curriculum developers. These implications highlight the potential of EFL education not only to develop language proficiency but also to promote global citizenship and sustainable thinking within the classroom.

For EFL teachers, it is essential to actively promote students' global awareness of the SDGs through purposeful classroom practices. Actually, they play a key role in bringing existing content to life by selecting meaningful materials and facilitating engaging learning experiences that connect language skills with real-world issues. Teachers can do this by selecting and adapting existing resources such as news articles, documentaries, and case studies that align with SDG-related themes. They should also encourage classroom activities that foster critical thinking and interaction, including debates, reflective writing, and students-led discussions. For beginner-level students, methods such as using educational videos, encouraging class participation, and introducing reading materials can be highly effective.

For graduate students, more advanced strategies such as academic debates, exposure to global conferences or study days, and critical analysis of sustainability content can deepen their

engagement. The teaching methods recommended in this study are grounded in the preferences expressed by the two student groups. Furthermore, teachers should be facilitators of discussion and inquiry, guiding students to make connections between language use and global challenges. To support this, professional development opportunities should be provided, helping teachers to develop the necessary competencies to confidently teach EFL in ways that promote awareness of sustainability and global citizenship.

Curriculum developers should ensure that the SDGs are adequately integrated into EFL curricula at different academic levels. This involves developing modules that connect language learning with global sustainability issues. The inclusion of SDGs in the curriculum would help students appreciate the relevance of their language studies to real-world issues. Thus, curriculum developers should work closely with teachers to provide them with the necessary resources and training to effectively incorporate SDGs into their lessons, ensuring that these global goals are consistently highlighted across different levels of academic progression.

Finally, it is crucial for students to recognize the significance of learning English not just as a language, but also as a tool for global awareness, particularly in relation to the SDGs. Students should actively participate in class discussions on sustainability and seek to enhance their knowledge of global issues. Engaging with the SDGs through language learning can not only improve English proficiency but also helps students develop a deeper sense of responsibility towards global challenges. Students should also take initiative in exploring how they can apply their language skills to contribute to the achievement of SDGs in their academic progression.

3.6. Limitations of the study

During the process of conducting this research, several limitations were encountered. Firstly, reaching Master 2 students was challenging because they were not regularly attending the university at the time of the study. This situation made the process of data collection slower and required extra coordination. Secondly, working with first-year students presented its own difficulties. Many of them were unfamiliar with the nature of the questionnaire and required additional explanations to complete it properly. This sometimes affected the spontaneity and depth of their responses. Moreover, the cultural context and social calendar also posed challenges. The administration of the questionnaire coincided with Ramadan, spring holidays, and Eid celebrations which delayed participation and extended data collection period as students took a long break. Despite these limitations, efforts were made to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings within the available circumstances.

3.7. Recommendations and suggestions for Future Research

In the light of these results. Future researchers are encouraged to explore several important areas related to this study. First, they can shift their focus on investigating EFL teachers' perceptions of how English language learning can foster students' awareness of SDGs. This is recommended because of the importance of teachers' views and practices in this process. Second, future researchers could examine the systematic integration of SDGs into EFL curricula. This allows us to show how to embed these themes effectively across different language skills to promote both language learning and global awareness. Finally, they may explore the role of SDG-based content in developing EFL learners' critical thinking. This study highlights how addressing global issues in the classroom can improve students' ability to analyze, reason, and problem-solve in English. Such research would offer valuable insights into linking EFL education with global citizenship and critical thinking development.

Conclusion

In order to build on the theoretical framework and investigate both the hypothesis and the research question, this practical chapter relied on the questionnaire as the primary data collection tool. It proved essential in generating relevant insights and enabled the researcher to examine the relationship between the two key variables. The findings revealed that although both groups of students (freshmen & seniors) exhibit a generally limited awareness of the SDGs, basically due to the inadequate integration of sustainability topics within the curriculum, there is a clear progression in awareness and critical engagement as students advance academically. While this progression might initially seem attributable to age-related differences, the fact that both groups belong to the same younger generation suggests that academic experience is the more decisive factor. Second -year Master's students, benefiting from increased academic experience, higher language proficiency, and greater exposure to SDG-related content, demonstrate a more informed and analytical perspective on sustainability issues. These results underscore the significant role that learning EFL plays in promoting awareness of SDGs.

General conclusion

Based on the investigation conducted, this study has explored the potential role of EFL learning in promoting university students' awareness of the SDGs. Specifically, it aimed to examine the extent to which EFL learning contributes to students' understanding of the SDGs, drawing on their own perspectives and learning experiences.

In this regard, the research findings indicate that EFL learners acknowledge the role of learning EFL in fostering global awareness of SDGs. While overall awareness remains limited, senior students (second-year Master's students) demonstrate a more developed understanding and critical engagement with sustainability issues. This highlights the influence of academic progression and increased exposure. This suggests that advancing through their studies and gaining more exposure to the English language (EFL) plays a key role in deepening their understanding and critical engagement with sustainability issues.

The study is divided into two primary sections: the theoretical part, which provides an overview of EFL and the SDGs, and the practical part, which presents the analysis and interpretation of the collected data. The theoretical framework consists of two chapters. The first chapter focuses exclusively on SDG awareness. It begins by examining the relationship between globalization and sustainable development, followed by an overview of the global goals, their historical context, and their interconnected nature.

The chapter then explores the concept of awareness in sustainability, highlighting its importance in fostering sustainable behaviour through various theoretical frameworks. It also discussed the socio-linguistic factors influencing SDG awareness, including age, gender, geographical location, linguistic background, and education level. Finally, the chapter emphasizes the role of education in promoting SDG awareness, particularly within higher education, and examines the connection between language and the SDGs.

In relation to this, chapter two examines the role of EFL in the context of globalization and sustainable development. It defines EFL and highlights its importance in communication, education, digital literacy, and cultural exchange. The chapter also outlines the main objectives and scope of EFL education, discusses the impact of globalization on language learning, and addresses challenges by EFL learners. It also considers sociolinguistic factors such as age, gender, and academic level. Finally, it explores how EFL education can support awareness of the global goals through global engagement and access to knowledge.

The practical part analyses the results from the questionnaire, providing insights into the current state of SDG awareness among EFL learners. Through the use of a quantitative-descriptive method, data was collected from two groups of students (first-year and second-year master learners) at the department of English Language and Letters, University of 08 Mai 1945-Guelma. The research tool employed is a semi-structured questionnaire designed to uncover how EFL exposure may influence learners' knowledge and perception of SDGs.

The results revealed that learners with more advanced EFL backgrounds display a stronger awareness of global issues and a greater engagement with sustainability-related content. Furthermore, the integration of SDG topics into English language learning appeared to shape a sense of responsibility among students. First, although overall awareness of the SDGs remains limited, senior students demonstrated more critical thinking and deeper engagement, particularly in responses to questions addressing the integration of SDGs in the curriculum (Q13), sources of information (Q12), and support for inclusion of SDG topics in language classes (Q14–16). For example, 90% of senior students reported using social media to learn about SDGs, and a significant portion advocated for integrating sustainability topics into EFL lessons. Their engagement was not only higher but also more analytical, indicating the influence of academic maturity and exposure to interdisciplinary discussions.

In contrast, freshmen students approached SDG content with optimism but lacked the same depth of understanding. Many showed basic familiarity with social dimensions of sustainability (Q6) but struggled to identify economic or environmental aspects. Moreover, 57.5% rated their awareness as low (Q5), and many identified lack of foundational knowledge as a barrier (Q9). Despite this, both groups expressed positive attitudes toward the relevance of SDGs in their studies, and around 60–72% agreed or strongly agreed that global goals are important for future development (Q7).

The study concludes that while English language learning does not automatically ensure SDG literacy, it can serve as an effective channel for fostering sustainability awareness—particularly when SDG themes are explicitly embedded within the curriculum. Strengthening this connection could empower students with both the linguistic and conceptual tools necessary to contribute meaningfully to sustainable development efforts.

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Appendices

(Appendix A)

Students' Questionnaire

The Role of Learning EFL in Promoting Awareness of SDGs among Students.

Dear participants,

This questionnaire is part of a research study on “The Role of EFL in Promoting Global Awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): A Sociolinguistic Analysis at the University of 08 Mai 1945 – Guelma.” Your responses will help us understand how EFL learning can enhance students' awareness of SDGs and contribute to global sustainability efforts. Please take a moment to complete this questionnaire. Your participation is highly valued, and your answers will be kept entirely confidential and will be used exclusively for the objectives of this study.

Thank you for your
collaboration.

Ms. Amel Brahmia

Ms. Nehla Serhani

Department of English

University of 8 Mai 1945, Guelma

Section One: General Background

1. What is your age?

- 17-20 years ☐
- 21–25 years ☐
- 26 years and above ☐

2. What is your gender?

- Male ☐
- Female ☐

3. How many years have you been studying English (including this year)?

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Section Two: Global Awareness of SDGs

4. How would you rate your knowledge of SDGs?

- Very low ☐
- Low ☐
- Moderate ☐
- High ☐
- Very high ☐

5. Which of the following areas of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are you most familiar with?

- Ecological (Climate Action, Clean Energy, Life on Land & Water) ☐
- Social (Gender Equality, Quality Education, Reduced Inequalities) ☐
- Economic (Decent Work, Industry & Innovation, No Poverty) ☐
- None of them ☐

6. Do you think promoting awareness of SDGs is important for global sustainability? (Global sustainability means) maintaining a long-term balance between environmental protection, economic development, and social well-being.

- Strongly Disagree ☐
- Disagree ☐
- Neutral ☐
- Agree ☐
- Strongly Agree ☐

7. Do you believe that learning the language plays a role in spreading awareness of SDGs?

- Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

8. What are the challenges that you face when increasing your awareness of SDGs?

- Limited Understanding of SDGs ☐
- Lack of Integration in Higher Education Curricula ☐
- Insufficient Focus on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) ☐
- Limited Access to SDG-Related Resources ☐
- Language Barrier in SDG Materials
- If you have another answer please share it,

.....
.....

Section Three: The Role of Learning EFL in Enhancing Global Awareness of SDGs

9. Has learning English helped you understand global issues, including SDGs?

- Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

10. How often do you come across SDG-related content in the English language?

- Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Very Often ☐

11. Which sources have exposed you to SDG-related content in English?

- English news websites (BBC, CNN, etc.) ☐
- Academic research articles ☐
- International / National conferences ☐

- Social media platforms ☐
- Online courses ☐
- Lessons offered by your teachers ☐
- classroom discussions ☐
- None of them ☐

- If other, please specify:

.....

12. Do your teachers mention the concept of SDGs in their lessons or discussions?

- Yes ☐ No ☐

- If yes, in which courses/ modules are SDGs mentioned?

.....

13. Do you think EFL courses should integrate SDG-related topics to increase awareness among students?

- Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know ☐

14. Which aspects of EFL learning do you think are most effective in promoting SDG awareness?

- Reading academic or news articles ☐
- Watching documentaries or educational videos ☐

- Participating in discussions & debates ☐
- Writing research papers or essays ☐
- Participating in international and international conferences and study days ☐
- Participating in classroom discussions and activities ☐
- I don't know ☐

15. Has learning English made it easier for you to participate in SDG-related discussions, projects, or initiatives?

- Yes ☐
- No ☐
- I don't know ☐

16. How do you think EFL teachers or curriculum developers could integrate SDG topics into English lessons?

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.....

.....

17. Do you have any suggestions for improving the role of EFL in promoting SDG awareness?

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Thank you!

(Appendix B)

<https://forms.gle/gkhcnFAnNV7cpqw87>

الملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة دور تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في تعزيز وعي الطلاب العالمي بأهداف التنمية المستدامة في جامعة 8 ماي 1945-قالمه، الجزائر. وتركز على بعض العوامل السوسولوجية مثل العمر، والجنس، والمستوى الأكاديمي لتحليل تأثيرها على تصورات الطلاب ومشاركتهم في موضوعات الاستدامة. ومن خلال اعتماد منهج وصفي مقارنة، تستهدف الدراسة عينة مكونة من 80 طالبًا، تضم 40 طالبًا من السنة الأولى و40 طالبًا من السنة الثانية ماستر من قسم الآداب واللغة الإنجليزية. وقد تم جمع البيانات من خلال استبيان مكون من 18 سؤالًا منها أسئلة مفتوحة وأخرى مغلقة. تكشف النتائج أن التعرّض لمحتوى اللغة الإنجليزية، بما في ذلك المناقشات الصفية والموضوعات العالمية، يساهم بشكل كبير في تعزيز وعي المتعلمين بأهداف التنمية المستدامة. ومن الجدير بالذكر أن طلاب السنة الثانية ماستر أظهروا مستوى أعلى من الوعي وتفاعلًا نقديًا أكبر مع قضايا الاستدامة مقارنةً بطلبة السنة الأولى، ويرجع ذلك على الأرجح إلى مستواهم الأكاديمي المتقدم وطول فترة تعرّضهم لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية. علاوة على ذلك، لاحظت الدراسة أن الطالبات كنّ عمومًا أكثر استجابةً لموضوعات الاستدامة، بينما برز المستوى الأكاديمي كعامل تنبؤ قوي لكل من الوعي والمشاركة. وقد أكدت النتائج على الدور الفاعل لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية في دعم تنمية المواطنة العالمية من خلال تزويد الطلاب بمهارات لغوية إلى جانب وعي نقدي ضروري لمواجهة التحديات العالمية المعاصرة. وفي الختام، أوصت الدراسة بضرورة إدماج محتوى مرتبط بأهداف التنمية المستدامة في مناهج اللغة الإنجليزية لتعزيز الكفاءة اللغوية والوعي الاجتماعي في آنٍ واحد.

الكلمات المفتاحية: أهداف التنمية المستدامة، تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، الوعي العالمي، طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية، المواطنة العالمية،

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