
ECOPOETIC DIMENSIONS OF LITERARY EDUCATION: FROM TEXTUAL INTERPRETATION TO ENVIRONMENTAL FORMATION

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Abstract: *constitutes a privileged medium for cultivating ecological awareness, ethical responsibility, and a sense of place-based identity. Anchored in the teaching of Désert (1980) by J. M. G. Le Clézio within the Licence Langue Française curriculum at the University of Kasdi Merbah Ouargla, Algeria, the study develops a five-dimensional ecopoetic framework (hermeneutic, aesthetic, anthropological, axiological, and formative) that reconfigures literary pedagogy as an act of environmental formation. The paper demonstrates how close reading of Désert enables Ouargla students to transition from passive literary interpretation to active ecological imagination. In a regional context marked by desertification and water scarcity, ecopoetic pedagogy emerges not merely as a didactic method but as a form of cultural resistance and ecological citizenship.*

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INTRODUCTION

The contemporary ecological crisis has rendered an already urgent question unavoidable: what is the role of literary education in a world threatened by environmental collapse? The teaching of literature, long conceived as the transmission of aesthetic forms and hermeneutic competencies, is now called upon to reposition itself at the intersection of the humanities and the ecological sciences. This paper addresses that question from a specific disciplinary vantage point: FLE (French as a Foreign Language) didactics, enriched by the conceptual resources of postcolonial ecocriticism and environmental humanities. In this reconfigured landscape, ecopoetics, understood as the critical and creative study of the relationships between literary language and the natural world, offers a compelling pedagogical paradigm for the university FLE classroom. As Serpil Oppermann (2012, p. 18) notes, ecocritical approaches in literary education possess a unique capacity to reshape students'

understanding of the human-nature continuum by engaging them affectively, cognitively, and ethically through the literary imagination.

This paper takes its departure from a specific and revealing pedagogical context: the teaching of J. M. G. Le Clézio's *Désert* (1980) within the *Licence Langue Française* curriculum at the University of Kasdi Merbah Ouargla, a major institution situated in the heart of the Algerian Sahara. The selection of this novel as a pedagogical corpus is neither arbitrary nor merely aesthetic. *Désert* is a text that inscribes the desert not as an empty, homogeneous expanse but as a living, speaking, and ethically demanding presence. Its polyphonic structure, weaving together the historical narrative of the *hommes bleus* resisting French colonial conquest in 1909–1910 and the contemporary story of Lalla, a young woman navigating displacement between a Maghrebi bidonville and Marseille, enacts precisely the kind of ecological, cultural, and postcolonial complexity that makes it an ideal matrix for ecopoetic pedagogy.

The theoretical framework draws on ecocriticism (Garrard, 2012; Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996), eco-aesthetics (Buell, 1995), postcolonial environmental humanities (Nixon, 2011), and philosophical ecology (Moser, 2014), while remaining attentive to the specific literary, linguistic, and social context of Algerian higher education. Methodologically, the study combines qualitative didactic research, grounded in close reading and applied ecocritical analysis, with preliminary exploratory data collected during a pilot implementation of the proposed module in the 2023–24 academic year at the University of Kasdi Merbah Ouargla. While systematic empirical validation remains a priority for future research, this exploratory dataset provides initial indications of the framework's pedagogical relevance and operationalisability. The framework also draws on Francophone ecocriticism (Magny, 2022) and place-based education theory (Gruenewald, 2003), which have enriched the debate on situated environmental pedagogy in postcolonial contexts.

The central argument is that ecopoetics, when applied to *Désert*, enables a pedagogical shift from textual analysis to what we term *environmental formation*: a deep, transformative process by which literature reshapes the reader's relationship to the non-human world, to their cultural heritage, and to their responsibilities as ecological citizens. Despite growing scholarly attention to ecocritical approaches in literary education, the application of ecopoetic frameworks to FLE pedagogy in Maghrebi university contexts remains critically underexplored. Existing studies in postcolonial ecocriticism (Nixon, 2011) and eco-aesthetics (Buell, 1995) have largely focused on Anglophone or metropolitan European contexts, leaving the specific intersection of Saharan ecology, Arabic-French linguistic identity, and literary formation unaddressed.

Five ecopoetic dimensions are identified and developed: hermeneutic, aesthetic, anthropological and cultural, axiological, and formative. Each dimension is theoretically grounded, textually illustrated through close reference to *Désert*, and operationalised through concrete pedagogical activities designed for the Ouargla context. Together, they constitute an integrated pedagogical ecology, a system in which no dimension operates in isolation and in which the literary text functions simultaneously as an object of knowledge, an aesthetic experience, an ethical laboratory, and an instrument of ecological consciousness.

Table 1. The Five Ecopoetic Dimensions: Framework, Competencies, Pedagogical Activities, and Ecological Outputs

No.	Dimension	Competencies Developed	Pedagogical Activities (Univ. Kasdi Merbah Ouargla)	Ecological Output
1	Hermeneutic	Eco-critical reading; non-human agency; epistemological reorientation	Close reading of desert motifs (wind, sand, light, silence) in <i>Désert</i> ; identification of nature as narrative subject; guided annotation workshops	Capacity to recognise the natural world as an agentive narrative presence
2	Aesthetic	Sensory immersion; ecological sensibility; narrative imagination	Expressive reading of lyrical passages; creative rewriting of Lalla's sensory experiences as a Saharan ecopoetic journal; comparative sensory analysis	Development of an ecological imagination rooted in embodied literary experience
3	Anthropological & Cultural	Place-based identity; postcolonial ecocriticism; cultural memory	Mapping Le Clézio's desert onto Ouargla's oases; workshops connecting Tuareg resilience to local Saharan heritage; documentation of foggara and ghout palm cultivation	Valorisation of indigenous ecological knowledge and cultural identity
4	Axiological	Environmental ethics; moral imagination; critical values	Structured debate: traditional ecological harmony vs. colonial modernity in <i>Désert</i> ; reflective writing on desertification; comparative text analysis with Algerian environmental writing	Formation of an ethical disposition toward the non-human world
5	Formative	Ecological responsibility; active citizenship; civic engagement	Ecopoetic writing workshops linked to anti-desertification projects; field observation in oases and ergs; interdisciplinary collaboration with Environmental Science	Transition from literary reader to ecologically committed citizen

Table 1 provides a synoptic overview of the five-dimensional ecopoetic framework at the heart of this study. Each dimension corresponds to a specific competency cluster, a set of context-sensitive pedagogical activities, and a measurable ecological output. Taken together, these five dimensions are not independent modules but mutually reinforcing components of an integrated pedagogical ecology. The sections that follow examine each dimension in turn, grounding the theoretical rationale in direct textual evidence from *Désert* and in concrete classroom practice at the University of Kasdi Merbah Ouargla.

A methodological note on citation practice is warranted. All quotations from *Désert* are given in English translation in the body of this article, in order to ensure accessibility for international readership. The original French text of each passage is provided in the corresponding footnote, enabling specialist readers to verify the ecopoetic texture of Le Clézio's prose at its source. Translations are the author's own, prepared in close dialogue with C. Dickson's standard English translation (*Desert*, Boston: David R. Godine, 2009). Italicised French terms retained in the body text

(such as *hommes bleus*, *comme dans un rêve*, *désertification du langage*, and *Es Ser*) are scholarly designations whose specific cultural and stylistic resonance makes direct translation insufficient; each is glossed in English upon first occurrence.

1. THE HERMENEUTIC DIMENSION: READING NATURE AS SUBJECT

The hermeneutic dimension constitutes the epistemological foundation of ecopoetic literary education. It concerns the interpretative practices through which students engage with the representation of the natural world in literary texts, moving beyond the conventional notion of landscape as mere backdrop to recognise the non-human environment as an active, agentive presence in the narrative. In *Désert*, this epistemological reorientation is inscribed from the novel's very first lines, which establish the desert as a force that both generates and consumes human presence.

The opening pages present the Saharan landscape not as a setting for human drama but as its very condition of possibility. The caravan of the *hommes bleus* descends into the valley *comme dans un rêve*, enveloped in sand and wind: "*They walked without sound through the sand, slowly, without looking where they were going. The wind blew ceaselessly, the wind of the desert, hot by day, cold by night. The sand fled around them.*" (Le Clézio, 1980, p. 7; our translation)¹

This passage exemplifies what Garrard (2012, p. 5) identifies as ecocriticism's core concern: the examination of the relationship between humanity and the rest of nature in cultural products. The desert here is neither passive nor neutral; it is a rhythmic, thermal, and sensory force that shapes human movement, embodiment, and interiority. For students at Ouargla, many of whom have grown up with the Sahara as a lived, daily environment, the hermeneutic challenge is double: to recognise the literary construction of the desert while simultaneously allowing that construction to illuminate and estrange their own ecological experience.

In Lalla's narrative thread, the hermeneutic dimension deepens further. Her relationship with the desert spirit, *Es Ser*, *The Secret*, introduces a dimension of ecological mysticism that resists both anthropocentric and purely materialist readings. When Lalla perceives the gaze that falls upon her during her wanderings on the stony plain, or when she enters into communion with the light through her encounter with the Hartani, the text stages what contemporary ecocriticism calls the 'more-than-human': the sense that agency, perception, and meaning extend beyond the human subject into the fabric of the natural world (Buell, 1995, pp. 7–8). As Oppermann (2012, p. 23) observes, such literary configurations of the more-than-human are particularly productive in pedagogical settings where students bring their own embodied ecological knowledge into dialogue with the fictional text.

In classroom practice at Ouargla, this dimension is activated through guided close reading exercises focused on the semantic and symbolic register of natural motifs: the *vent*, the *lumière*, the *silence*, the *sable*. Students are invited to trace the recurrence and transformation of these motifs across both narrative strands, mapping the desert's changing functions, including exile, sanctuary, memory, and spiritual force, set against the novel's historical and social contexts. Such hermeneutic work challenges deeply ingrained colonial and modernist representations of the desert as an empty, conquerable space, and opens instead onto a mode of reading that is simultaneously literary, ecological, and culturally situated.

¹ Original text: « *Ils marchaient sans bruit dans le sable, lentement, sans regarder où ils allaient. Le vent soufflait continûment, le vent du désert, chaud le jour, froid la nuit. Le sable fuyait autour d'eux.* » (Le Clézio, 1980, p. 7)



The hermeneutic dimension also invites students to interrogate the politics of representation: who speaks for the desert? Whose ecological knowledge is recognised as legitimate? In *Désert*, Le Clézio systematically privileges the embodied, non-verbal knowledge of the nomadic communities, including Ma el Aïnine's warriors and the Hartani's silent communion with the land, over the extractive, instrumental gaze of colonial modernity. This pedagogical confrontation with epistemological plurality is, as Glotfelty and Fromm (1996, p. xix) remind us, central to the ecological reorientation of literary studies.

2. THE AESTHETIC DIMENSION: SENSORY IMMERSION AND ECOLOGICAL SENSIBILITY

If the hermeneutic dimension concerns the cognitive and interpretative encounter with the natural world in literary texts, the aesthetic dimension addresses the experiential and sensory dimensions of that encounter. Ecopoetics proposes a radical extension of aesthetic inquiry: the literary work as a medium for cultivating ecological sensibility: a heightened, attentive, empathetic responsiveness to the non-human world.

Le Clézio's prose style in *Désert* is paradigmatically ecopoetic in this regard. The novel's language performs the very sensory immersion it describes. Rhythm, repetition, and cadence mirror the cyclical rhythms of wind, tide, and desert light. Long, accreting sentences accumulate sensory detail the way dunes accumulate sand. The prose does not represent the desert so much as it enacts a *désertification du langage*, a process by which language is stripped to its essentials, purified by the sun and hollowed out by silence. Le Clézio's formal procedures, namely parataxis, nominal accumulation, and the systematic displacement of the human subject, are inseparable from his environmental vision, a quality that places *Désert* in an identifiable tradition of eco-aesthetic writing theorised by Buell (1995) and analysed in its specifically Francophone dimension by Magny (2022, pp. 98–105).

This aesthetic register is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the passages describing Lalla's morning excursions to the dunes:

"There are traces, here and there, in the dust of the old paths, and Lalla amuses herself following them. [...] Every time Lalla walks along the path, at the edge of the sea, she thinks of the sea so blue, in the middle of all the dust from the truck, and of those long silent blades that moved sideways." (Le Clézio, 1980, pp. 104–105; our translation)²

Here, the aesthetic experience of nature is inseparable from memory, loss, and identity: the sea Lalla perceives is overlaid with the sea she first glimpsed through the truck's canvas after her mother's death, and both are suffused with a maternal presence she cannot fully recover. Aesthetic ecology and psychological depth are woven into a single literary gesture. This is what Buell (1995, p. 7) describes as the environmental text's capacity to frame nature as a process rather than a constant: nature understood as event, as becoming, as irreducible singularity.

In pedagogical terms, the aesthetic dimension is activated through several complementary activities. Expressive reading sessions invite students to attend to the rhythmic and sonic qualities of Le Clézio's prose, exploring how formal choices create an experience of ecological immersion.

² Original text: « Il y a des traces, un peu partout, dans la poussière des vieux chemins, et Lalla s'amuse à les suivre. [...] Chaque fois que Lalla marche sur le sentier, au bord de la mer, elle pense à la mer si bleue, au milieu de toute la poussière du camion, et à ces longues lames silencieuses qui avançaient de travers. » (Le Clézio, 1980, pp. 104–105)



Creative rewriting exercises ask students to compose short eco-poetic fragments from the perspective of Ouargla's own landscape, including the oases of Aïn Beïda, the sebkha's salt flats, and the sand corridors of the ergs, using *Désert* as a formal and sensory model. Comparative sensory analysis encourages reflection on how literary language shapes environmental perception: what does the Sahara sound like, smell like, feel like in Le Clézio's prose, and how does this compare to the students' own embodied experience?

Such activities cultivate what we might call, following Nussbaum's (2010, p. 96) concept of 'narrative imagination', an *ecological imagination*: the capacity to dwell imaginatively within the sensory experience of another person, another species, another landscape. This aesthetic education is not an ornament to the 'serious' work of grammatical and textual analysis; it is the very medium through which *Désert* produces its most profound ethical and environmental effects.

3. THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL DIMENSION: LITERATURE, PLACE, AND POSTCOLONIAL ECOLOGY

The anthropological dimension proceeds from the recognition that the human relationship to the natural world is always already embedded in specific cultural matrices, that is, systems of knowledge, memory, ritual, language, and cosmology through which a community inhabits and interprets its environment. Literary education, from this perspective, is not merely an encounter with aesthetic forms; it is an encounter with alternative ways of knowing and dwelling in the world.

In *Désert*, the anthropological dimension is inscribed with particular intensity in the figure of Nour and the community of the *hommes bleus*: "*They were the men and women of the sand, the wind, the light, the night. [...] They carried with them hunger, the thirst that makes lips bleed, the hard silence where the sun shines, the cold nights, the gleam of the Milky Way, the moon.*" (Le Clézio, 1980, p. 11; our translation)³

This passage encodes an ecology of embodiment: the desert is not something these people know about; it is something they are, carried in their bones, their thirst, their nocturnal vision. This form of intimate ecological knowledge is what Nixon (2011, p. 4) understands as the environmental knowledge of the dispossessed, simultaneously the most ecologically sophisticated and the most systematically marginalised by colonial modernity.

For students at Ouargla, this dimension opens onto a deeply personal and politically charged set of questions. The Ouargla region is home to a complex heritage of Tamazight-speaking communities, Ibadi traditions, ancient oasis agricultural systems, and Tuareg nomadic traditions, all of which are under accelerating pressure from urbanisation, sedentarisation, and climate-induced desertification. Reading *Désert* in this context is not an exercise in cultural tourism; it is an act of cultural recognition and, potentially, of cultural recovery. Gruenewald's (2003, p. 3) concept of 'place-based education' offers a productive theoretical complement here, foregrounding the pedagogical necessity of grounding learning in students' lived territorial experience.

Intercultural workshops designed around this dimension invite students to research and document the traditional ecological practices of the Ouargla region, including palm grove cultivation, seasonal pastoral routes, and water management through foggara systems, and to situate these within

³ Original text: « *Ils étaient les hommes et les femmes du sable, du vent, de la lumière, de la nuit. [...] Ils portaient avec eux la faim, la soif qui fait saigner les lèvres, le silence dur où luit le soleil, les nuits froides, la lueur de la Voie lactée, la lune.* » (Le Clézio, 1980, p. 11)



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the pedagogical framework of the novel. Such activities do not merely enrich the literary reading; they constitute an act of cultural and ecological archive-building with value beyond the classroom. Magny (2022, pp. 112–117) argues that Francophone literature of the Maghreb constitutes a distinctive ecocritical corpus precisely because it articulates ecological loss and cultural dispossession within a single literary register, a convergence that is both historically determined and pedagogically productive.

4. THE AXIOLOGICAL DIMENSION: LITERATURE AS AN ETHICAL LABORATORY

The axiological dimension concerns the values, both explicit and implicit, that literary texts carry and transmit, and the ethical reflection they invite. The axiological dimension of *Désert* is one of the novel's most compelling pedagogical features: its systematic juxtaposition of two antithetical value systems: on the one hand, the holistic, relational ecology of the desert communities; on the other, the extractive, commodity-driven ecology of colonial and post-colonial modernity.

This axiological confrontation is dramatised most powerfully in the scenes where Lalla, newly arrived in Marseille, navigates the alienating anonymity of the urban environment. Her daily walk through the city's crowds and traffic, evoked in the novel as « all this movement, these forms, these flashes of light, [...] that form a whirlwind », stands in stark contrast to her attentive, contemplative relationship to the dunes, the sea, and the desert light. The city is experienced as ecological violence: sensory overload without meaning, motion without direction, human density without community.⁴

Yet the text refuses a simple pastoral nostalgia. Lalla's Marseille is also a space of solidarity, of the diasporic community, of unexpected beauty. When she retreats to the abandoned dock area to eat her bread and watch the port, she finds a partial ecological refuge in the urban landscape:

"Lalla feels the sun enter her, fill her little by little, chase away everything that is dark and sad within her. [...] She becomes like a piece of rock, covered in lichen and moss, motionless, without thought, dilated by the warmth of the sun." (Le Clézio, 1980, p. 232; our translation)⁵

This passage stages what the axiological dimension of ecopoetic education seeks to cultivate: the capacity to inhabit, through the literary text, a radically different ethical and ecological orientation toward the world. Students who engage with this passage are invited not merely to interpret it, but to evaluate it: what does it mean to value slowness over speed, presence over productivity, ecological attentiveness over commodity consumption? As Bertrand (2019, p. 204) demonstrates, the literary classroom represents an irreplaceable site for the cultivation of 'slow ethical reasoning': a form of moral deliberation that resists the velocity of contemporary technocapitalism.

In pedagogical terms, the axiological dimension is developed through structured debates contrasting the novel's ecological ethics with contemporary discourses of development and extractivism in the Algerian Sahara, reflective writing exercises in which students articulate their own ecological values, and comparative text analysis connecting *Désert*'s critique of colonial

⁴ Original text: « tous ces mouvements, ces formes, ces éclats de lumière, [...] qui font un tourbillon » (Le Clézio, 1980, p. 232)

⁵ Original text: « Lalla sent le soleil la pénétrer, l'emplir peu à peu, chasser tout ce qu'il y a de noir et de triste au fond d'elle. [...] Elle devient comme un morceau de rocher, couvert de lichen et de mousse, immobile, sans pensée, dilatée par la chaleur du soleil. » (Le Clézio, 1980, p. 232)



modernity with contemporary Algerian environmental writing. Dewey's (1934, p. 35) claim that art is experience, in the sense that the aesthetic encounter is itself a mode of moral formation, finds its fullest expression in this axiological dimension.

5. THE FORMATIVE DIMENSION: FROM READING TO ECOLOGICAL CITIZENSHIP

The formative dimension is both the culmination and the telos of ecopoetic literary education. It concerns the transformative effects of literary engagement on the learner's identity, dispositions, and social commitments, specifically the ways in which sustained encounter with an ecopoetic text like *Désert* can produce not merely a more competent reader, but a more ecologically conscious, ethically responsive, and civically engaged human being. The theoretical groundwork for this aspiration has been developed by Myren-Svelstad (2020), whose concept of 'sustainable literary competence' provides a rigorous framework for articulating the overlaps between literary education and the competences required for sustainable citizenship, foregrounding the importance of polysemy, affect, and dialogic encounter in the literary classroom.

The formative power of *Désert* is most fully expressed in its ending. Having traversed colonial Algeria and the social margins of Marseille, Lalla stands on the deck of a boat returning to the Maghreb, her body carrying a new life, her memory saturated with the songs of her mother and the light of the Sahara: "*And when she hears their song, Lalla feels deep within her, very secretly, the desire to see again the white earth, the tall palm trees in the red valleys, the expanses of stone and sand, the great solitary beaches.*" (Le Clézio, 1980, p. 298; our translation)⁶

This ending is pedagogically exemplary because it stages the return not as regression but as formation: Lalla returns to the desert not as the orphaned child she was at the novel's opening, but as a subject constituted by her ecological and cultural inheritance, carrying that inheritance forward into a new generation. The desert, with its silence, its light, and its capacity for radical stripping-away, has been the crucible of her formation.

In the specific context of Ouargla, this formative dimension acquires immediate urgency. The Saharan region faces a constellation of ecological crises: advancing desertification, declining water tables, the degradation of palm grove ecosystems, and cultural disruption produced by rapid sedentarisation and urban growth. Literary education that remains indifferent to these realities is not merely incomplete; it is, arguably, complicit in their continuation. Ecopoetic pedagogy, by contrast, positions literature as an instrument for ecological formation, a space in which students develop the critical consciousness, the imaginative empathy, and the civic commitment necessary to engage with these challenges.

Nixon's (2011, p. 4) concept of 'slow violence', understood as the gradual and invisible environmental destruction visited upon marginalised communities, provides a powerful theoretical framework for this formative work. Students who have learned to read the slow violence of colonial dispossession in *Désert* are better equipped to recognise and resist the slow ecological violence of desertification, water privatisation, and cultural homogenisation in their own region. As Dewey (1934, p. 35) observed, the experience of art does not conclude with the final page; it continues to work in the subject, reshaping perception and generating new dispositions toward the world.

⁶ Original text: « *Et quand elle entend leur chanson, Lalla sent au fond d'elle, très secret, le désir de revoir la terre blanche, les hauts palmiers dans les vallées rouges, les étendues de pierres et de sable, les grandes plages solitaires.* » (Le Clézio, 1980, p. 298)

6. PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION: AN ECOPOETIC PEDAGOGY IN ACTION

The theoretical framework elaborated in the preceding sections would remain incomplete without a detailed account of its practical implementation. This section describes a four-week module centred on *Désert* that operationalises the five ecopoetic dimensions within the constraints of the *Licence Langue Française* curriculum.

Table 2: Synoptic Overview of the Ecopoetic Module: Sessions, Dimensions, and Learning Trajectory

Session	Ecopoetic Dimension(s)	Core Activity	Key Corpus Reference	Learning Outcome
Session 1	① Hermeneutic ② Aesthetic	Close reading of desert motifs; annotation workshops; expressive re-reading of lyrical passages	<i>Désert</i> , pp. 7–17 (opening; caravan; vent, sable, lumière)	Recognition of non-human agency; development of ecological imagination
Session 2	③ Anthropological & Cultural	Student presentations on foggara, ghout palm cultivation, pastoral routes; mapping exercise (Saharan geographies)	<i>Désert</i> , pp. 50–80 (Hartani; place-based ecology; Lalla and the land)	Valorisation of indigenous knowledge; place-based identity formation
Session 3	④ Axiological	Formal seminar debate on traditional vs. modern ecological values; reflective writing on personal environmental ethics	<i>Désert</i> , pp. 130–160 (colonial confrontation; nomadic resistance; Ma el Aïnine)	Ethical disposition toward non-human world; critical values formation
Session 4	⑤ Formative	Outdoor ecopoetic writing workshop (oasis / sebkha); collective anthology; public presentation to partner schools or APNE	<i>Désert</i> (style model throughout); Lalla's sensory journal as formal template	Transition from literary reader to ecologically committed citizen

The four-session sequence outlined in table 2 is designed as a progressive spiral rather than a linear progression: later sessions revisit and deepen insights from earlier ones, while the anthropological dimension functions as a transversal thread connecting all four phases. The architecture reflects a pedagogical conviction that ecological formation cannot be compartmentalised but must emerge from the sustained, layered engagement of cognitive, sensory, ethical, and civic capacities. The following sections provide a detailed account of the module's institutional context, session design, assessment framework, and community partnerships.

6.1 MODULE DESIGN AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

The module is conceived as an integrated unit within the third-year Literature course, typically taught in the second semester. It comprises twelve contact hours (four three-hour sessions) supplemented by guided independent work, field activities, and interdisciplinary workshops. The institutional framework of the *Licence Langue Française* at Ouargla presents both constraints and opportunities: national curricular requirements fix certain canonical texts and competency objectives,



but the modular organisation of literary teaching offers sufficient flexibility to embed ecopoetic approaches without disrupting existing pedagogical structures.

6.2 SESSION ARCHITECTURE

Session 1 (Hermeneutic and Aesthetic) opens with a collective close reading of the novel's first ten pages, focusing on the lexical and rhythmic construction of the desert as an agentic presence. Students work in groups to identify and annotate the semantic fields associated with natural elements, namely wind, sand, light, and silence, before reconvening for a guided plenary discussion. Each student formulates one interpretative question generated by their encounter with the text's ecological dimension.

Session 2 (Anthropological and Cultural) begins with oral presentations by student research groups on traditional ecological practices of the Ouargla region: foggara irrigation, ghout palm cultivation, and seasonal pastoral routes. These presentations are connected to specific passages in *Désert*, enabling a layered reading in which Le Clézio's literary ecology and the students' lived ecological knowledge enter into productive dialogue. The session includes a mapping exercise in which students superimpose the novel's geographical coordinates onto a contemporary map of the Maghreb.

Session 3 (Axiological) is structured as a formal seminar debate. Students are assigned positions, for or against the claim that 'traditional ecological values represent a viable response to contemporary environmental challenges', and are required to ground their arguments in specific textual evidence from *Désert* as well as in contemporary Algerian environmental policy documents. The debate is followed by a structured reflective writing exercise.

Session 4 (Formative) takes the form of an ecopoetic writing workshop conducted, where logistically feasible, in one of the oasis environments surrounding Ouargla. Students compose short ecopoetic texts in response to the landscape they inhabit, using specific stylistic and thematic elements from *Désert* as their formal frame. These texts are compiled into a collective anthology shared with partner schools and local environmental associations.

6.3 ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Assessment integrates four components, each aligned with a specific dimension of the ecopoetic framework: a close reading commentary (hermeneutic and aesthetic, 30%), an individual research dossier on traditional ecological practices of the Ouargla region (anthropological, 25%), a reflective essay on personal ecological values (axiological, 20%), and the ecopoetic writing portfolio (formative, 25%). This diversified assessment architecture reflects the conviction that the full range of ecopoetic education's transformative effects, namely cognitive, affective, ethical, and civic, requires correspondingly diverse instruments of measurement.

6.4 INTERDISCIPLINARY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

In order to enhance the formative dimension of the ecopoetic module, we propose the development of a formal interdisciplinary partnership between the Département de Langue Française and the Faculté des Sciences de la Nature et de la Vie (SNV) of the University of Kasdi Merbah Ouargla. This partnership, currently at the stage of institutional proposal, would target two specialities of the SNV faculty:



A. Sciences Agronomiques: Zones Arides. Students of agronomy would bring rigorous scientific perspectives to the literary representations of desert agriculture, traditional foggara irrigation, and palm grove cultivation in the novel. A joint seminar would enable reciprocal pedagogy between literary imagination and scientific knowledge.

B. Sciences de l'Environnement: Aquaculture et Protection de l'Environnement. Environmental science students would be invited to participate in the ecopoetic writing workshops of Session 4, contributing their technical expertise on water scarcity, biodiversity loss, and ecosystem rehabilitation. This encounter would enrich both sides of the collaboration.

Community partnerships extend this interdisciplinary logic beyond the university. Collaboration with the Maison de la Culture de Ouargla and the Algerian Association for Environmental Protection (APNE) would provide students with a platform to present their ecopoetic texts to broader public audiences, situating literary production within a concrete civic and environmental context.

6.5 PRELIMINARY EXPLORATORY DATA: PILOT IMPLEMENTATION

In response to recommendations from peer reviewers, and in the interest of grounding the theoretical framework in initial empirical evidence, this section presents preliminary data drawn from a pilot implementation of the ecopoetic module conducted during the 2023–24 academic year with a third-year cohort ($n = 23$ students) in the *Licence Langue Française* programme at the University of Kasdi Merbah Ouargla. It is important to emphasise that these data are exploratory in nature: they do not constitute systematic empirical validation of the five-dimensional framework, and should be read as preliminary indications and heuristic evidence rather than as definitive proof of the model's efficacy. Rigorous empirical validation, incorporating longitudinal observation, larger sample sizes, and validated measurement instruments, remains a primary direction for future research.

Data were collected from four sources: student annotation worksheets (Session 1), ecopoetic writing portfolios (Session 4), individual reflective essays (axiological component), and instructor field notes across all four sessions. A post-module questionnaire ($n = 21$ respondents) measured self-reported changes in ecological awareness, attitude toward Saharan heritage, and civic intent. Table 3 summarises the data sources and indicators collected.

Table 3: Exploratory Data Sources: Pilot Implementation, 2023–24 Cohort ($n = 23$)

Data Source	n / Scope	Indicators Collected
Student annotation worksheets (Session 1)	$n = 23$ students (2023–24 cohort)	Frequency of non-human agents identified; interpretative questions formulated; quality of ecological reading (rubric: 0–4)
Ecopoetic writing portfolio (Session 4)	$n = 23$ texts	Sensory register (lexical density); ecological motifs; civic dimension (self-evaluation grid)
Reflective essays (axiological component)	$n = 23$ essays	Identification of ecological values; critical distance from colonial discourse (thematic coding)
Instructor field notes	4 sessions observed	Student engagement; quality of discussion; interdisciplinary connections made
Post-module questionnaire	$n = 21$ respondents	Perceived ecological awareness (Likert scale, 5 items); attitude toward Saharan heritage; civic intent

Table 3 presents the four data sources mobilised during the pilot implementation, together with the specific indicators collected from each. The triangulation of these sources, combining quantitative measures (annotation frequency, Likert-scale responses) with qualitative instruments (thematic coding, instructor observation), was designed to capture the full breadth of the framework's effects, spanning hermeneutic perception, value formation, and civic intent. Preliminary analysis of the resulting dataset yields three provisional findings, discussed below.

Preliminary analysis of these data suggests three provisional findings, subject to replication with larger cohorts. First, annotation worksheets revealed a marked increase, from an average of 3.1 non-human agents identified in pre-module close reading tasks to 8.7 in Session 1, suggesting that guided ecocritical reading activates a measurable shift in students' perceptual orientation toward the natural world in literary texts. Second, thematic coding of the reflective essays indicated that 18 of 23 students (78%) explicitly connected colonial dispossession in *Désert* to contemporary ecological challenges in their own region, a convergence that constitutes a core axiological learning objective of the module. Third, post-module questionnaire results indicated that 17 of 21 respondents (81%) reported an increased sense of personal responsibility toward the Saharan environment, with 14 (67%) indicating an intention to engage in at least one community or civic action related to environmental protection in the following year.

These preliminary findings are broadly consistent with the theoretical framework proposed in this article, but should be treated with appropriate caution. The absence of a control group, the small sample size, and the potential for social desirability bias in self-reported data all limit the strength of inference that can be drawn. They are offered here as preliminary evidence of pedagogical efficacy and as a basis for the more rigorous empirical research programme outlined in the Limitations section.

CONCLUSION

This paper has argued that ecopoetic literary education, developed within the field of FLE didactics and enriched by postcolonial environmental humanities, represents a significant and necessary reorientation of literary pedagogy in the context of the contemporary ecological crisis. By integrating five interdependent dimensions, namely hermeneutic, aesthetic, anthropological and cultural, axiological, and formative, ecopoetics transforms the literary classroom into a space of ecological reflection, ethical formation, and civic engagement.

The choice of Le Clézio's *Désert* as pedagogical corpus is not incidental but symptomatic. The novel's formal and philosophical architecture, with its immersive sensory prose, its ecological mysticism, its postcolonial critique and its narrative of displacement and return, makes it an extraordinarily productive matrix for ecopoetic education. The desert that traverses the novel is not merely a geographical referent; it is an ethical imperative: a demand that we attend to the non-human world with the same rigour, the same empathy, and the same political consciousness that we bring to the study of human societies.

In the Saharan context of Ouargla, this imperative is neither abstract nor remote. Ecopoetics here is not a metropolitan cultural luxury transplanted to a peripheral context; it is a response to the lived ecological realities of a community whose environment, heritage, and future are under accelerating threat. Preliminary exploratory data from the 2023–24 pilot implementation suggest that



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the framework is pedagogically viable and responsive to the specific social and ecological conditions of the Ouargla context, a finding that encourages, and indeed demands, systematic empirical follow-up.

No ecopoetic dimension operates in isolation: the hermeneutic feeds the aesthetic; the aesthetic deepens the anthropological; the anthropological grounds the axiological; the axiological gives purpose to the formative. Together, they constitute an integrated pedagogical ecology, a system in which literature, nature, culture, and citizenship form an irreducible whole. The student who emerges from this process does not merely possess new analytical tools; she has been, in the deepest sense, formed: not only as a reader of texts, but as an inhabitant of the world.



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