

Ecopoetic and Eco-Narratological Textual Analysis of Poems and Short Stories Published in Dagmay, a Mindanao Literary Journal (2020–2025)

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ABSTRACT

This study examined how climate-themed poems and short stories published in Dagmay, a Mindanao literary journal, construct environmental meaning through literary form. Using a qualitative descriptive-interpretive textual design grounded in ecocriticism, ecopoetics, and eco-narratology, the study analyzed a criterion-based purposive corpus of 15 texts published from 2020 to 2025, consisting of 10 poems and five short stories by Mindanaoan writers. Repeated close reading, genre-specific coding, human–environment relationship coding, cross-genre synthesis, literature comparison, and researcher reflexivity were used to develop the interpretations. The poems generated ecological meaning primarily through imagery, metaphor, sound and rhythm, symbolism, personification, and related formal features that rendered

land, water, heat, storms, flooding, and nonhuman life as sensory, affective, and ethical experience. The short stories organized ecological uncertainty through plot, focalization, temporality, spatiality, narrative voice, and storyworld construction. Across genres, human–environment relationships emerged as relations of sustenance, threat, interdependence, vulnerability, agency, and adaptation. Four cross-genre patterns were especially prominent: environmental agency, continuous disruption, affect and embodiment, and adaptive survival. These findings informed an Ecopoetic–Eco-Narratological Framework for Teaching Climate Narratives that connects close reading, ecological reflection, contextual connection, and student production of climate narratives. The study demonstrates the value of Dagmay as a regional literary archive for ecocriticism, Mindanao literary studies, and locally grounded climate pedagogy.

Keywords: *ecopoetics, eco-narratology, Dagmay, Mindanaoan literature, climate narratives, climate pedagogy*

INTRODUCTION

Climate change, biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation, and intensifying environmental hazards have made ecological instability a cultural as well as scientific and policy concern. In the Philippines, these pressures are experienced through recurrent typhoons, flooding, drought, extreme heat, coastal change, livelihood insecurity, and displacement. Literary texts provide a distinctive record of these conditions because they do not only name environmental problems; they organize ecological experience through language, image, perspective, memory, and emotion. Ecocriticism therefore offers a productive way of examining how literary form participates in environmental understanding (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996; Garrard, 2012).

The interpretive stakes are especially important in the Global South, where ecological disruption intersects with historical inequality, poverty, extractive development, and uneven access to resources. Nixon (2011) describes environmental harm as capable of accumulating gradually rather than appearing only as spectacular catastrophe, while Morton (2013) emphasizes the difficulty of representing environmental processes whose scale

exceeds ordinary perception. These concerns are relevant to Philippine regional writing, where environmental pressure is frequently embedded in ordinary livelihood, place, memory, and survival rather than separated from social experience.

Mindanao offers a particularly significant context because ecological diversity overlaps with Indigenous, Moro, settler, rural, coastal, and urban histories. Studies of Mindanao have emphasized the importance of built environments, regional identity, traditional ecological knowledge, and cultural memory in understanding place (Akpodonu & Saloma-Akpodonu, 2022; Espina, 2020; Ortiz, 2021). Such contexts make regional literary archives important sites for examining how environmental meanings are localized and how communities imagine vulnerability, resilience, and ethical relations with land and water.

Dagmay provides one such archive. The journal publishes literary work connected with Mindanao and offers a concentrated body of poetry and short fiction grounded in regional landscapes and experiences (About Dagmay, n.d.). Yet the source thesis identifies limited scholarship that analyzes Dagmay through a combined form-centered ecopoetic and eco-narratological approach. Existing ecocritical work often foregrounds environmental themes, whereas this study asks how genre-specific formal strategies themselves generate ecological perception and meaning.

Accordingly, the study examined selected climate-themed poems and short stories published in Dagmay from 2020 to 2025. It identified the ecopoetic strategies used in the poems, the eco-narratological strategies used in the short stories, the human–environment relationships represented across the corpus, the patterns that recur across genres, and the pedagogical framework that may be developed from the findings. By retaining the formal differences between poetry and fiction while reading them within a shared Mindanaoan context, the study positions literary craft as a route to ecological reflection rather than as a decorative container for environmental themes.

Literature Review

Ecocriticism, environmental crisis, and affect

Ecocriticism examines the relations among literature, culture, human communities, and the more-than-human world. Foundational work stresses that environmental representation is inseparable from ethical assumptions about what counts as nature, whose experiences are recognized, and how human agency is situated within ecological systems (Glottfelty & Fromm, 1996; Garrard, 2012). More recent climate-oriented perspectives complicate this by showing that ecological crisis may be gradual, distributed, and difficult to perceive within conventional narrative scales (Nixon, 2011; Morton, 2013).

Environmental meaning is also affective. Albrecht (2022) emphasizes the emotional vocabulary needed for environmental change, while Galway et al. (2019) document the growing literature on place-based distress and solastalgia. McCaffery and Boetto (2024) likewise show how climate-related emotions are increasingly central to understanding ecological crisis. These perspectives support literary analysis that attends not only to environmental subject matter but also to how texts make ecological pressure felt through anxiety, grief, anticipation, vulnerability, and embodied sensation.

Ecopoetics and the formal construction of environmental experience

Ecopoetics directs attention to the formal means through which poetry shapes environmental perception. Ryan (2016) argues for an eco-humanities approach in which poetic narratives can connect botanical and climate concerns with cultural interpretation. Contemporary work likewise emphasizes attentiveness, vulnerability, and the capacity of poetic form to register ecological pressure rather than merely communicate environmental information (Lord, 2024; Loreto, 2025). Imagery, metaphor, sound, rhythm, lineation, and personification can therefore be understood as ecological meaning-making strategies.

This emphasis is particularly useful for climate poetry because environmental phenomena such as heat, rain, drought, and flooding are often experienced bodily before they are interpreted conceptually. Formal

compression, repetition, sonic intensity, and figurative language can make ecological disturbance immediate and affectively charged. In this study, ecopoetics provides the working lens for asking how environmental conditions become sensory and relational and how nonhuman entities acquire agency within the poems.

Eco-narratology, storyworlds, and environmental uncertainty

Eco-narratology extends ecocritical inquiry to the organization of narrated worlds. Weik von Mossner (2017) demonstrates that perspective, emotion, and narrative structure shape how readers encounter environments, risk, and vulnerability. D'Orto (2025) similarly highlights narrativity as an important dimension of climate-change education because narrative structure gives temporal and experiential form to environmental processes. Plot, focalization, temporality, spatiality, narrative voice, and storyworld construction are thus central to how environmental uncertainty becomes intelligible.

Narrative form is especially important when ecological pressures unfold through anticipation, repetition, livelihood cycles, memory, and delayed consequences. Local narratives can connect environmental change with social meaning and resilience (Marschütz et al., 2020). In the selected Dagmay stories, eco-narratology enables the analysis to trace how sea, storm, urban space, harvest, fish scarcity, and memorial places become part of characters' decisions, fears, debts, hopes, and adaptations rather than remaining passive settings.

Indigenous knowledge, regional literature, and Mindanaoan ecological imagination

Regional and Indigenous knowledge systems complicate universalized accounts of environmental crisis by emphasizing place-specific relations, memory, stewardship, and cultural continuity. Delgado-Serrano et al. (2023) synthesize research showing the importance of Indigenous knowledge in community-based climate adaptation, while Jacoba (2025) highlights ancestral land and environmental stewardship in the Philippine Cordillera. These studies reinforce the need to interpret environmental representation within specific cultural and historical contexts.

Mindanaoan writing provides a particularly rich field for this work. Espina (2020) connects ecology and identity in Lumad narratives, Ortiz (2021) foregrounds survival and forest relations in Manobo poetic traditions, and Sta. Ana (2023) links traditional art, environmental change, and cultural meaning. These studies support a regional reading of Dagmay in which ecological representation is inseparable from livelihood, memory, identity, and the uneven pressures experienced by communities in Mindanao.

Climate pedagogy and literary learning

Literary study can contribute to climate education when environmental reflection remains grounded in the formal and contextual features of texts. Hindhede (2024) argues for ecojustice-oriented literature pedagogy that connects environmental and social questions, while Myren-Svelstad (2024) demonstrates how dialogic engagement with poetry can support learning for sustainable development. Such approaches caution against reducing literature to a vehicle for general environmental messages; instead, literary craft should remain central to how ecological understanding is developed.

This pedagogical orientation is consistent with the source study's proposed framework, which links close reading, ecological reflection, affective engagement, regional context, and student production. The framework is provisional rather than experimentally validated. Its value at this stage lies in translating the textual findings into a structured approach for teaching climate narratives while preserving the analytic distinction between poetic and narrative form.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

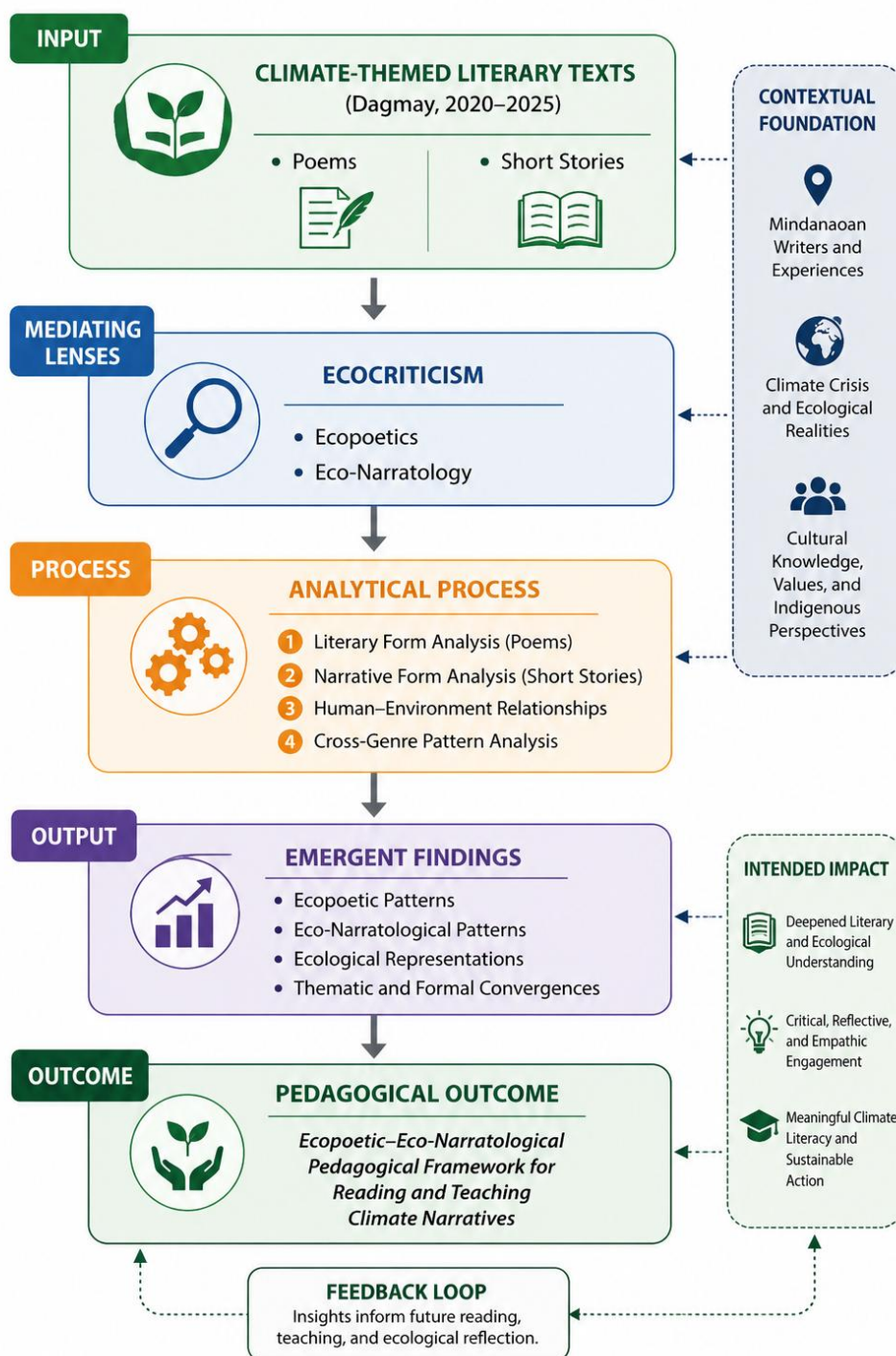


Figure 1. Original conceptual framework of the study.

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a qualitative descriptive-interpretive textual design grounded in ecocriticism, ecopoetics, and eco-narratology. The design was appropriate because the research focused on formal patterns, symbolic relationships, narrative organization, environmental representation, and interpretive meaning rather than on numerical variables. Poems and short stories served as the primary data and were analyzed through repeated close reading and genre-specific coding.

Research Context and Corpus

The research context was Dagmay, a Mindanao literary journal, and its digital archive. The corpus consisted of climate-themed texts published from 2020 to 2025 and written by Mindanaoan authors. The final analytic corpus contained 15 works: 10 poems published from 2020 to 2024 and five short stories published from 2020 to 2023. The poems included works such as *That Leaf*, *Flightless Cormorants*, *Mababasa Rin ang Lupang Tuyo*, *Pulaw*, *About Water*, *Burning in Davao*, and *City Cloud*, while the short stories included *Pagdunggo*, *Tsunami*, *Pangamuyo sa Bag-Ong Tuig*, *Habeas Corpus*, and *Nagpahiping Maghahalad*.

Table 1. *Corpus profile for the textual analysis.*

Corpus group	No. of texts	Publication years	Analytic focus
Poems	10	2020–2024	Imagery, metaphor, symbol, sound, rhythm, lineation, personification
Short stories	5	2020–2023	Plot, focalization, temporality, spatiality, narrative voice, storyworld

Corpus Selection and Sampling Technique

Criterion-based purposive selection was used. A text was included when it was published within the stated period, was written by a Mindanaoan author, and engaged substantively with ecological disruption, climate-related experience, disaster, displacement, altered landscapes, livelihood, or human–environment interaction. Environmental elements had to perform a meaningful role in the text’s imagery, action, narrative organization, or central concern rather than functioning as incidental scenery. The corpus size prioritized depth of close reading and cross-genre comparison.

Analytic Instruments

The analysis used a close-reading protocol, an ecopoetic coding guide, an eco-narratological coding guide, a human–environment relationship coding matrix, a cross-genre synthesis matrix, a researcher reflexive memo, and a findings-to-framework development matrix. These materials formed an auditable trail from textual observation to coding, interpretation, synthesis, and pedagogical translation. Secondary scholarship on ecocriticism, ecopoetics, eco-narratology, Philippine climate literature, and Mindanao studies was used to clarify concepts and position the findings within related literature.

Data Gathering Procedure

Full texts were retrieved from Dagmay’s digital archive and screened using the stated inclusion criteria. Each selected work was read repeatedly before formal coding. Initial annotations recorded genre-specific formal features and preliminary ecological observations. The researcher then organized the texts into the working corpus and maintained analytic notes that linked textual details to later interpretations. Published scholarly sources were gathered separately for theoretical clarification and literature comparison.

Data Analysis

Textual analysis proceeded in seven linked stages: corpus familiarization through repeated reading; genre classification; ecopoetic coding of imagery, metaphor, symbol, sound, rhythm, lineation, and personification; eco-narratological coding of plot, focalization, temporality, spatiality, narrative voice, and storyworld; coding of human–environment relationships such as sustenance, threat, interdependence, vulnerability, adaptation, and agency; cross-genre synthesis of recurring patterns; and translation of the findings into the proposed pedagogical framework. Literature comparison followed the primary analysis so that areas of agreement, extension, and regional distinctiveness could be identified without replacing the textual evidence.

Ethical Consideration

The study analyzed published literary works and scholarly sources and did not involve human participants. Ethical responsibility centered on accurate citation, transparent interpretation, respect for copyright, and avoidance of plagiarism or misrepresentation. Literary passages were used selectively for close reading, and Dagmay authors and texts were acknowledged. Cultural and Indigenous materials were interpreted with attention to Mindanaoan historical and ecological contexts, and researcher reflexivity was maintained to recognize the situated nature of interpretation. For non-English passages, the source methodology used a translation protocol that retained the original line, provided a literal translation, added an interpretive translation when necessary, and supplied a cultural note when context might otherwise be lost.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ecopoetic strategies in the selected poems

The poems construct ecological meaning through interconnected formal strategies rather than through environmental subject matter alone. Imagery renders rain, lightning, heat, flood, land, and water as embodied conditions; metaphor converts ecological relations into ethical and social meanings; sound and rhythm reproduce environmental pressure through repetition and compression; and personification or symbolism gives water, city, sea, and other nonhuman or built environments an agentive presence. The overall pattern is consistent with ecopoetic scholarship that treats attention, affect, and vulnerability as central to poetic encounters with environmental crisis (Lord, 2024; Loreto, 2025).

Table 2. Ecopoetic strategies in the selected poems.

Strategy	Representative poems	Ecological meaning
Imagery	Pulaw; Burning in Davao; City Cloud	Rain, lightning, heat, flood, and urban movement produce embodied environmental experience.
Metaphor	That Leaf; Mababasa Rin ang Lupang Tuyo; Flightless Cormorants	Leaf–tree relation, dry land, blood, and flightlessness translate ecological relations into ethical meaning.
Sound and rhythm	Pulaw; Burning in Davao; City Cloud	Repetition, compressed phrasing, and sonic intensity render rain, heat, and city flooding as felt conditions.
Personification/symbol	About Water; City Cloud; On a cliff	Water, city, and sea are represented as agentive presences rather than passive backgrounds.

The detailed readings show how these strategies work through particular ecological relations. In Pulaw, persistent storm imagery makes rainfall an ongoing domestic and emotional condition rather than a distant meteorological event. City Cloud combines flood imagery, rhythm, and personification to place urban movement inside ecological disruption. That Leaf makes identity relational by presenting the leaf through its dependence on the tree, while Mababasa Rin ang Lupang Tuyo connects dry land with labor, suffering, and violence. Flightless

Cormorants complicates adaptation by showing that traits fitted to one environment can become vulnerabilities when human intervention changes ecological conditions. These interpretations reinforce the eco-humanities view that poetic form can make climate and ecological processes materially and ethically legible (Ryan, 2016).

Eco-narratological strategies in the selected short stories

The short stories organize environmental experience through narrative relationships among plot, focalization, temporality, spatiality, narrative voice, and storyworld. Environmental conditions become meaningful because they shape decision-making, fear, livelihood, memory, hope, and adaptation. This finding aligns with eco-narratological approaches that emphasize the cognitive and affective force of perspective and storyworld construction (Weik von Mossner, 2017) and with climate-education research that recognizes narrativity as a way of making complex environmental processes intelligible (D’Orto, 2025).

Table 3. Eco-narratological strategies in the selected short stories.

Story	Plot structure	Focalization	Temporality/spatiality	Ecological meaning
Pagdunggo	Survival shaped by fish scarcity and debt	Jonas-centered livelihood focalization	Cyclical fishing time; expanded sea space	The sea sustains and withholds survival.
Tsunami	Anticipatory disaster plot	Child focalization through Jokjok	Immediate fear before catastrophe	Threat is socially imagined before it arrives.
Pangamuyo sa Bag-Ong Tuig	Ritual and renewal structure	Community-centered perspective	New Year cycle; agrarian/fishing rhythms	Hope depends on harvest and fishing conditions.
Habeas Corpus	Urban risk and pursuit structure	Socially embedded urban perspective	Storm-night urgency; congested spaces	Ecology intersects with built environment and social precarity.
Nagpahiping Maghahalad	Memory, violence, and confession	Restricted psychological focalization	Delayed revelation; memorial space	Place becomes a site of vulnerability and ethical reckoning.

Pagdunggo demonstrates how fish scarcity and debt create a survival plot in which the sea is simultaneously livelihood and uncertainty. Tsunami constructs disaster first through anticipation and child focalization, making ecological threat socially and emotionally present before any catastrophe is realized. Pangamuyo sa Bag-Ong Tuig connects environmental cycles with ritual hope, harvest, and fishing, whereas Habeas Corpus situates ecological risk within congested urban space and storm-night urgency. Nagpahiping Maghahalad turns place into a memorial and ethical space through delayed revelation and psychological focalization. Across the five stories, the environment is not a background but a component of the storyworld that structures human possibility, consistent with research on local narratives of environmental change and resilience (Marschütz et al., 2020).

Human–environment relationships across the corpus

Across poetry and short fiction, human–environment relations are reciprocal but unstable. Land, sea, harvest, rain, and other ecological systems sustain livelihood and identity while also exposing characters and speakers to scarcity, danger, uncertainty, and loss. The texts therefore resist a simple division between benevolent nature and destructive nature; the same environments can sustain and threaten, while human intervention can intensify vulnerability. This relational view is compatible with regional and Indigenous perspectives that treat environmental knowledge, livelihood, and identity as interdependent rather than separate domains (Delgado-Serrano et al., 2023; Jacoba, 2025).

Table 4. Typology of human–environment relationships across the corpus.

Relationship type	Representative texts	Interpretation
Sustenance	Pagdunggo; Pangamuyo sa Bag-Ong Tuig	Sea, harvest, and fishing support family and community survival.
Threat/risk	Pulaw; Tsunami; Burning in Davao	Rain, storm, heat, and imagined waves create fear, danger, and vulnerability.
Interdependence	That Leaf; Pangamuyo sa Bag-Ong Tuig	Identity, livelihood, and hope are tied to ecological systems.
Vulnerability	Flightless Cormorants; Mababasa Rin ang Lupang Tuyo	Nonhuman life, land, and human bodies absorb the consequences of disruption.
Agency/adaptation	About Water; City Cloud; Pagdunggo	Water, city, and sea act on human life while characters negotiate survival.

These relationships foreground vulnerability as relational rather than inherent. The cormorants become vulnerable when ecological conditions change; fishing families become precarious when marine abundance declines; urban communities continue moving through heat, flooding, and congestion; and land becomes a material record of labor and violence. The corpus thus resonates with Mindanao-centered scholarship in which ecological identity, cultural memory, and survival are tied to specific places and histories (Espina, 2020; Ortiz, 2021; Sta. Ana, 2023).

Cross-genre ecological patterns

Cross-genre synthesis identified four major patterns. First, environmental agency is condensed in poetry through image, symbol, and personification and extended in fiction through plot, focalization, and storyworld. Second, disruption is continuous rather than episodic: poems use repetition and intensifying imagery, while stories use cyclical plots and delayed resolution. Third, ecological experience is affective and embodied, linking physical sensations with fear, hope, grief, uncertainty, and memory. Fourth, survival is adaptive and unfinished rather than triumphant. These patterns show convergence without erasing the formal differences between genres.

Table 5. Cross-genre ecological patterns in poems and short stories.

Pattern	Poems	Short stories	Cross-genre interpretation
Environmental agency	Image, symbol, personification	Plot, focalization, storyworld	Nature and built spaces act on human life.
Continuous disruption	Repetition and intensifying imagery	Cyclical plots and delayed resolution	Ecological crisis is everyday and cumulative.
Affect and embodiment	Sound, rhythm, heat, water, and land are felt bodily	Perspective shapes fear, hope, and uncertainty	Ecological meaning is cognitive and emotional.
Adaptive survival	Metaphor registers limits of adaptation	Characters negotiate livelihood, risk, displacement	Survival is provisional rather than triumphant.

The emphasis on continuous disruption is particularly significant because it shifts ecological crisis away from a single-event model and toward cumulative everyday pressure. This recalls Nixon’s (2011) account of slow violence and is consistent with studies of climate-related emotional experience, in which environmental change becomes psychologically meaningful through sustained place-based attachment and loss (Galway et al., 2019; McCaffery & Boetto, 2024). The Dagmay corpus gives these concerns a regional literary form by embedding them in rain, heat, fishing, land, city space, ritual, memory, and ordinary movement.

Ecopoetic–Eco-Narratological Framework for Teaching Climate Narratives

The textual findings were translated into a pedagogical framework rather than treated as a separate intervention unrelated to the analysis. The framework places climate-themed literary texts in dialogue with two genre-sensitive lenses: ecopoetics for imagery, metaphor, and sound, and eco-narratology for plot, focalization, temporality, and space. At the center are close textual analysis and ecological reflection. These processes lead to critical literacy, environmental awareness, cultural understanding, and student production of poems, short stories, or reflective outputs. The design is consistent with climate-literature pedagogy that retains close reading while connecting interpretation with ecological and social questions (Hindhede, 2024; Myren-Svelstad, 2024).

Table 6. Findings-to-pedagogical framework alignment.

Source	Key finding	Framework component
RQ 1	Ecopoetic strategies create sensory and affective ecological meaning.	Literary analysis and ecological reflection
RQ 2	Eco-narratological strategies organize crisis through plot, focalization, time, and space.	Narrative mapping and contextual connection
RQ 3	Human–environment relationships are interdependent, vulnerable, adaptive, and agentive.	Ethical reflection and human–environment inquiry
RQ 4	Cross-genre patterns show agency, continuous disruption, embodiment, and survival.	Pattern synthesis and comparative reading
RQ 5	The findings are translated into a proposed reading and teaching approach.	Classroom application and reflective climate pedagogy



Figure 2. *Ecopoetic–Eco-Narratological Framework for Teaching Climate Narratives* developed from the study findings.

The framework remains a proposed, study-derived model rather than a validated instructional intervention. The source thesis explicitly recommends expert review and classroom pilot testing before broader use. Its contribution at this stage is conceptual: it demonstrates how ecopoetic and eco-narratological findings may be translated into teaching processes that preserve attention to literary form while deepening ecological reflection, cultural context, and affective engagement.

CONCLUSION

The analysis demonstrates that environmental meaning in the selected Dagmay texts is produced through literary form as well as environmental content. In poetry, imagery, metaphor, sound, rhythm, symbolism, and personification make ecological conditions sensory, embodied, relational, and ethically charged. In short fiction, plot, focalization, temporality, spatiality, narrative voice, and storyworld construction organize environmental pressure through livelihood, fear, memory, decision-making, and adaptation. Across both genres, human–environment relations are characterized by sustenance and threat, interdependence and vulnerability, agency and adaptation. The cross-genre patterns of environmental agency, continuous disruption, affect and embodiment, and adaptive survival reveal an ecological imagination in which crisis is embedded in everyday life rather than resolved through simple recovery. The study contributes a regionally grounded reading of Mindanaoan climate literature and proposes an Ecopoetic–Eco-Narratological Framework that connects close literary analysis with ecological reflection and climate pedagogy without collapsing the formal differences between poetry and fiction.

Recommendation

1. Literature educators may use the proposed Ecopoetic–Eco-Narratological Framework as a guide for teaching climate-themed texts, provided that ecological reflection remains anchored in close reading of literary form and regional context.
2. Curriculum developers may give greater space to Philippine regional climate literature, including Mindanaoan texts, so that environmental learning reflects culturally and ecologically situated experiences rather than relying only on generalized global examples.
3. Learners may be engaged in analytical and creative responses such as close-reading journals, eco-poetry, short climate narratives, comparative textual analysis, and reflective activities that connect literary interpretation with local environmental awareness.
4. The proposed framework should undergo expert validation by literature educators, curriculum specialists, and ecocriticism scholars, followed by classroom pilot testing before claims are made about its effectiveness or wider applicability.
5. Future studies may extend the framework to novels, essays, creative nonfiction, oral literature, or multimedia texts and compare the present form-centered approach with postcolonial ecocriticism, Indigenous studies, discourse analysis, or related frameworks.
6. Further research may include reader-reception studies, teacher and author interviews, classroom implementation, and comparisons with other Philippine regional literary journals to examine how different audiences respond to climate-themed literature.

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