



A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF HOW MORAL VALUES ARE TAUGHT IN PRIMARY SCHOOL ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS

Daniel Geraldine Pratama Putra¹, St. Shabibatul Rohmah²

Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Banyuwangi^{1,2}

E-mail Coresponding : danielmagelhaens1712@gmail.com¹, shabibatul.rohmah@untag-banyuwangi.ac.id²

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Corresponding Author:

Daniel Geraldine Paratama Putra

Email Corresponding :

danielmagelhaens1712@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study critically explores how moral values are incorporated and communicated in the primary school English textbooks "My Next Words Grades 3 and 4." Using a qualitative research approach, the study applies Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine both textual and visual components of the textbooks. The objective is to uncover the moral ideologies embedded in the content and assess how these values correspond with broader cultural and educational goals. By analyzing linguistic elements, stories, and images, the study identifies recurring themes such as respect, empathy, and responsibility, while also revealing implicit messages related to cultural norms and social hierarchies. The findings indicate that while the textbooks effectively promote moral education, some portrayals perpetuate stereotypes and fail to include diverse viewpoints. This research enhances our understanding of the connection between language learning and moral development, offering valuable insights for curriculum developers and educators aiming to create more inclusive and ethically enriching educational materials.

Keywords: *Critical Discourse Analysis, Moral Values, English Textbooks.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a cornerstone in the development of children's moral values, with primary school textbooks serving as essential tools for both academic instruction and moral guidance. In Indonesia, English textbooks like "My Next Words Grades 3 And 4" are widely utilized not just to teach language skills but also to instill moral values in students (Sitio et al., 2023). These textbooks are expected to deliver clear, developmentally appropriate lessons that foster the growth of character, empathy, and respect for diversity (Carpenter & Singh, 2023; Novak et al., 2023; Sitio et al., 2023).

Despite the importance of textbooks in moral education, there is a significant gap in research exploring how these values are communicated through educational materials,

particularly within the Indonesian context. Textbooks are designed to present moral lessons, but they often fall short of expectations. They may contain cultural biases, portray imbalanced gender representations, or provide unclear moral teachings that do not adequately support the intended educational outcomes (Tsui & Tollefson, 2007; Fadilah et al., 2023). Additionally, the effectiveness of these textbooks in conveying moral education can be compromised by inadequate teaching methods and a lack of supportive learning environments, which further hinders their ability to influence students' moral development positively (Rizvi & Rahman, 2022).

To address this gap, this study employs critical discourse analysis (CDA) to investigate how moral values are communicated in English

Vol 8, No 1 (2025): ESTEEM

textbooks used in Indonesian primary schools, with a focus on the "My Next Words Grades 3 and 4" series. CDA is a valuable tool for examining the language, narratives, character representations, and imagery used in textbooks (Chen & Liu, 2023). This approach is crucial because textbooks play a significant role in shaping children's perceptions of the world, their place within it, and their understanding of moral concepts (Vaandering & Reimer, 2021; Dar et al., 2010; Ratih & Arsih, 2024).

The analysis in this study will consider several key aspects, including how characters are depicted, how stories are narrated, and how language and imagery are used to convey moral values. By scrutinizing these elements, the study aims to uncover any biases or inconsistencies that may affect students' moral understanding. For instance, textbooks that depict gender roles stereotypically may inadvertently reinforce outdated social norms rather than promoting equality and respect (Tsui & Tollefson, 2007; Che-Aron & Matcha, 2023; Sujati et al., 2023). Similarly, if moral lessons are conveyed ambiguously or inconsistently, students may struggle to grasp the intended messages, leading to confusion rather than moral clarity.

The findings from this study will be valuable for educators, policymakers, and textbook authors. By identifying the strengths and weaknesses of current textbooks, this research can provide crucial insights into how moral education can be more effectively integrated into the curriculum. For example, educators may learn how to better select or adapt textbooks to ensure they align with moral education goals, while policymakers may use the findings to guide the development of more robust educational standards and guidelines (Brown & Smith, 2023; Putri et al., 2023). Additionally, textbook authors can refine their content, ensuring

that moral values are communicated clearly, consistently, and engagingly.

As the importance of moral education in developing well-rounded individuals continues to grow, it is crucial that textbooks serve as effective tools for this purpose. The ability of textbooks to convey moral values in a way that resonates with students is essential for their success in fostering the development of ethical, empathetic, and socially responsible individuals (Williams, 2021). This study's contribution lies in identifying current shortcomings and offering practical recommendations for enhancing moral education through textbooks.

The role of textbooks in moral education, particularly in the context of Indonesian primary schools, cannot be overstated. Through critical discourse analysis, this research seeks to illuminate how moral values are taught and received in English textbooks, providing actionable insights that can help educators, curriculum developers, and textbook authors improve the quality and impact of these educational tools (Chen & Liu, 2023). By refining the content and presentation of moral values in textbooks, educators can better support students in developing strong moral foundations, contributing to a more just and compassionate society (Rizvi & Rahman, 2022).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Moral Education in Primary School Textbooks

Recent studies highlight the increasing importance of integrating moral education into primary school textbooks, as they serve both academic and ethical purposes. Textbooks reflect societal norms and promote values such as respect, responsibility, and empathy. Zhang and Liu (2023) examined English textbooks in Asian countries, showing

Vol 8, No 1 (2025): ESTEEM

that these materials significantly influence students' behavior and moral frameworks. Similarly, Hartono and Setyowati (2022) found that Indonesian English textbooks incorporate moral values like honesty and cooperation alongside language lessons.

However, textbooks alone may not be enough for moral development. Rizvi and Rahman (2022) argued that educators must use interactive and reflective teaching methods to engage students in discussions about moral lessons. Ahmed and Khan (2023) emphasized that moral lessons should align with local norms to avoid confusion and disengagement.

Studies have shown the positive impact of well-designed textbooks on moral development. Williams (2021) found that students exposed to textbooks with clear moral messages demonstrated higher empathy and ethical reasoning. Brown and Smith (2023) observed that themes like social justice and environmental stewardship encouraged greater civic participation. Visual content is also crucial for moral education. Lee and Choi (2024) found that inclusive illustrations promoted cooperation and diversity, while biased visuals undermined moral lessons. Sari and Nugroho (2023) highlighted the need for more diverse representations in Indonesian textbooks to foster multicultural understanding. In conclusion, textbooks can significantly contribute to moral education if they are thoughtfully designed, addressing challenges related to content, visuals, and pedagogy to support students' ethical development.

Integrating Moral Values in EFL Textbook

The integration of moral values in EFL Textbooks plays as crucial role in shaping learners character and values. According to Gorsuch and Bruland (2003), exposure to moral content in

language learning can help student develop empathy, integrity, and a sense of fairness. By engaging with moral dilemmas and ethical considerations, learners are encouraged to reflect on their own values and beliefs, fostering a deeper understanding of ethical principles (Purnomo et al., 2024).

Incorporating Moral values in EFL textbook can have profound impact on learners overall development. Brown (2007) emphasizes that exposure to moral issues in language education can enhance students critical thinking skills and decision making abilities. By grappling with moral complexities presented in text and discussions, learner are challenged to analyze situation from different perspectives and make reasoned judgments. Moreover, Byram (2008) asserts that integrating moral values in EFL material can contribute to the cultivation of intercultural competence and global citizenship among learners. Through exposure to diverse moral perspectives and ethical frameworks, students are better equipped to navigate cross-cultural interactions and develop a respectful attitude towards cultural diversity (Sujiati et al., 2023; Tanaka, 2023; Fitriyah & Jannah, 2021).

The role of textbooks in education, particularly in shaping students' moral values, has been a subject of increasing interest in educational research. Textbooks, especially at the primary school level, serve not only as tools for linguistic and cognitive development but also as important vehicles for the transmission of cultural and moral norms. In many countries, including Indonesia, moral education is woven into the broader curriculum, with textbooks playing a key role in introducing and reinforcing societal values to young learners. The textbook *My Next Words* Grades 3 and 4 is widely used in primary schools as part of the English curriculum, making it a suitable focus for examining

Vol 8, No 1 (2025): ESTEEM

how moral values are taught through language learning materials.

Analyzing Textbook through Critical discourse analysis (CDA)

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) provides a powerful framework for investigating how moral values are constructed and conveyed in educational texts. CDA allows researchers to unpack the relationship between language, ideology, and power by analyzing how discourse shapes social realities and reinforces certain beliefs. In the context of primary school education, textbooks like *My Next Words* not only teach language skills but also implicitly promote particular moral viewpoints through their choice of words, characters, and scenarios. This makes CDA a useful tool for analyzing how language in the textbook serves to inculcate moral values.

The teaching of moral values in educational settings is part of a global trend to develop responsible, ethical, and socially aware citizens. Many governments and educational institutions, including those in Indonesia, emphasize the importance of moral and character education alongside academic instruction. English textbooks, used as a medium for language acquisition, often incorporate stories and dialogues that are designed to teach students not only grammatical structures but also ethical behavior, such as honesty, respect, and kindness. These values are often embedded within stories, character interactions, and real-life situations depicted in the textbook, subtly guiding students toward understanding what is considered morally acceptable.

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This study situates itself within the broader discourse on moral education in language teaching, drawing on previous research that highlights the role of textbooks in moral and character development. Studies have shown that language textbooks often serve dual purposes—teaching language skills while also imparting cultural and moral lessons. In summary, this research context highlights the dual role of English textbooks in language education and moral instruction, while positioning critical discourse analysis as a vital tool in uncovering the subtle ways in which moral values are communicated to students.

3. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative research design to analyze how moral values are communicated in primary school English textbooks, specifically the "My Next Words Grades 3 and 4" series. A literature review is employed to examine existing research on the portrayal of moral values in educational materials. The research utilizes Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), focusing on both textual and visual elements within the textbooks to explore how moral values are conveyed through language, narratives, and images.

Data collection involves examining sentences, dialogues, and visual elements that reflect moral values, with a particular emphasis on those conveying social interactions or ethical principles. Textual data includes dialogues and exercises,

Vol 8, No 1 (2025): ESTEEM

while visual data includes illustrations and captions. Critical Discourse Analysis, based on Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional framework, is used to analyze the linguistic features, production and consumption of the text, and the cultural and ideological contexts of the material (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

The data analysis procedure involves three stages: textual analysis of language features to identify moral values, discursive practice to examine how the text engages students and educators, and social practice to explore the broader cultural and ideological contexts. This multi-layered analysis provides insights into the ways moral values are embedded in textbooks and how they align with societal norms and educational goals.

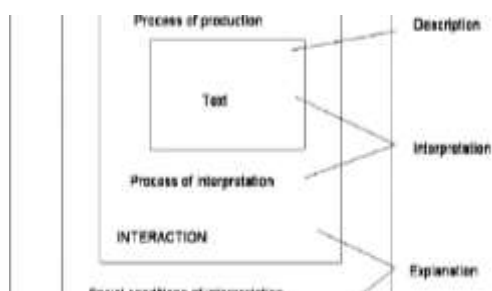


Figure 1. Fairclough 1992

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result


Based on the analysis the findings are summarized in table 1 into below


Table 1. Analysis of moral value in grades 3:

Moral values	Examples
Respect & Politeness	<p>asking about what are</p>

	being done (Pages 50)
Responsibility & Cooperation	<p>students are watering the plants (pages 68)</p>
Diversity in illustrations	<p>Students are dancing tari saman (pages 68)</p>
Gender Representation	<p>students are playing soccer (pages 47)</p>



Vol 8, No 1 (2025): ESTEEM


Cultural Contextualization	 <p>students borrowing and reading books (pages 68)</p>
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Diversity in illustrations	 <p>students are dancing Tari piring (pages 4)</p>
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Based on the analysis the findings are summarized in table 2 into below

Table 2. Analysis of moral value in grades 4:

Moral Values	Examples
Respect & Politeness	 <p>asking about what is being done (pages 1)</p>
Responsibility & Cooperation	 <p>students are discussing in class (pages 3)</p>

Cultural contextualization	 <p>students are commuting by bicycle (pages 4)</p>
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Discussion

The analysis of My Next Words textbooks for Grades 3 and 4 reveals how moral values are integrated into the English language learning process. The books emphasize respect, responsibility, diversity, and cultural contextualization, which align with Indonesia's broader educational goals, particularly character education. These values are presented through dialogues, situational examples, and activities that teach not only language skills but also important social values such as politeness, respect, and cooperative behavior. This approach helps students develop both linguistic proficiency and ethical principles, preparing them for real-life social interactions.

In terms of responsibility and cooperation, the textbooks feature activities such as students working together on tasks or taking care of plants,

Vol 8, No 1 (2025): ESTEEM

reinforcing the importance of teamwork and communal efforts. This reflects Indonesia's cultural emphasis on collective success rather than individual achievement. By presenting students with relatable examples, the textbooks encourage them to internalize the lessons of responsibility and collaboration, which are essential for both academic and personal development. Such activities also help students build practical life skills that they can apply in future contexts, both professionally and personally.

The textbooks also include illustrations that celebrate Indonesia's cultural diversity, such as depictions of traditional dances like Tari Saman and Tari Piring, which promote national identity and appreciation for cultural differences. These visual elements help students recognize and value diversity, fostering inclusivity and intercultural competence. Additionally, everyday scenarios in the textbooks, such as borrowing books or commuting by bicycle, are culturally contextualized, making the content more engaging and relevant to students' lives. This approach not only enhances comprehension but also connects moral lessons to real-world experiences, deepening students' understanding of the values being taught.

5. CONCLUSION

Conclusion, the *My Next Words Grades 3 and 4* textbooks demonstrate a thoughtful integration of moral values through both textual and visual elements. By emphasizing respect, responsibility, diversity, and cultural context, they align with Indonesia's educational goals of character development. However, areas such as gender representation and the inclusion of global issues present opportunities for further improvement. Future research could explore how these

representations influence students' long-term moral and cultural development.

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Vol 8, No 1 (2025): ESTEEM

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Vol 8, No 1 (2025): ESTEEM

2653

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